

Number  
6

THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

Francis P. Jennings, editor

1

---



Copyright by  
The Newberry Library

1983

THE AMERICAN INDIAN AND THE  
AMERICAN REVOLUTION

d

Papers written for a conference of the  
Newberry Library Center for the History of the American Indian  
21-22 February 1975

Edited by Francis Jennings

## Preface

As part of the celebration of the Bicentennial of the American Revolution, the Newberry Library sponsored a conference, 21-22 February 1975, on The American Indian and the American Revolution. The following papers constitute the Proceedings of that conference.

The papers were submitted to several publishers who rendered judgment (after much delay) that an insufficient market existed for commercial viability. Publication has been further delayed by intense activity on other projects and programs in the Center for the History of the American Indian. For the long lapse until the present, the editor apologizes.

But these papers deserve an audience greater than the limited number of persons who could be packed into the Newberry's lounge, enthusiastic though they were. Therefore this publication in the Center's Occasional Papers format.

As to the matter of the conference, the outlooks discussed will be unfamiliar to readers accustomed to think of the Revolution in terms of liberation of a people groaning under tyranny. For Native Americans, the Revolution meant a sort of liberation rather different from its effects for the colonial revolutionaries. Indian liberation was a liberation from homes and lands.

The conference's essayists were asked to discuss both the impact of the Revolution on Indians and the impact of Indians on the Revolution; and further to consider whether there is "a single past" that is both recoverable and usable for all people. In a sense these are technical questions that mean less to laymen than to professional historians, but they can be rephrased in words that make the technical issues alive and contemporary for everyone. In translation, the essayists were being asked whether Amerindians and Euramericans had lived in the same society during the Revolutionary Era, and whether they can now learn lessons profitable to both of them from a historical account that both can accept as true. This was not a small order, and none of the essayists chose to offer a confident, comprehensive answer. Instead they attempted, each in his own realm of competence, to present examples of the kind of history recovered by themselves. The usability of these essays -- the lessons they might hold -- were left to the audience to discover as they are now left to the reader.

There can be no doubt, however, of one response by the essayists. Through all their papers, the fact stands clear that Amerindian and Euramerican were involved with each other during the Revolution. Though the two peoples lived mostly in separate communities, they acted upon each other incessantly in trade, politics, war, and consciousness, and the reciprocal impacts of their actions were powerful. Had there been no Indian population in eighteenth-century American society, the Revolution would have been a very different sort of affair. Quite possibly it might not have occurred at all.

Indians have been shunted off to a separate corner of American history for so long that the assertion of their involvement and participation comes as a sort of revisionism. Like most revisions of factual understanding, this one implies a need to revise theoretical

interpretations also. Many possibilities arise, and the essayists herein have had varying ideas of which directions to pursue. Our conference's critic, Vine Deloria, Jr., has also suggested a variety of re-interpretations in a suitable provocative summary.

One word more should be said in regard to the varied approaches of the essayists to their task. They were directed, in the interests of opening up new avenues of thought, to push on speculatively "beyond what can be documented to what can be intuited." There are obvious hazards in such an assignment. Beyond the documents, one historian's intuition may be another's superstition, and out there in no man's land a writer can be a standing target for anyone who feels like heaving a brick. Aware of this, the essayists responded to their instruction with varied degrees of abandon. Generally they have preferred to keep at least one foot safely planted on reliable source documents. Readers should remember that where the essayist used more freedom he was venturing in full compliance with instructions.

It is a mark of our present generation's desire to subject old traditions to new scrutiny -- to see historical truth as accurately as possible in spite of disturbance to comfortable preconceptions -- that the funding for this conference was provided by the Bicentennial Commissions of Illinois, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. All of these midwestern states were originally formed out of the old Northwest Territory which, before the Revolution, had been Indian territory protected by the British crown against colonial settlement. It speaks well for the integrity of these sponsoring bicentennial commissions that they made the conference and this book possible without attempting in any way to influence the participants' findings or judgments.

F.J.

THE NEWBERRY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ON THE AMERICAN INDIAN  
AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

February 21-22 1975

The Newberry Library  
60 W. Walton Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60610

February 21 (Friday)

10:00 a.m. Pre-conference session on the Newberry Library Center  
for the History of the American Indian, and a display  
of some of the Newberry's collections of Indian History.

D'ARCY McNICKLE, Director, The Newberry Library Center  
for the History of the American Indian  
ROBERT E. BIEDER, Associate Director  
JOHN AUBREY, Assistant Head of Special Collections,  
The Newberry Library

2:00 p.m. First Conference Session

Chairman: MARTIN ZANGER, University of Wisconsin, Lacrosse;  
Fellow, The Newberry Library

REGINALD HORSMAN, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee  
The Image of the Indian in the Age of the  
American Revolution

BERNARD SHEEHAN, Indiana University  
The Relationship between the Ideology of the  
Revolution and White Views of the American  
Indian

Comment: ROBERT F. BERKHOFER, University of Michigan

7:30 p.m. Second Conference Session

Chairman: DAVID BEAULIEU, Moorhead State College, Fellow,  
The Newberry Library

MARY ELAINE FLEMING MATHUR, Central Michigan University  
Savages are Heroes, Too, Whiteman: Chief Hendrick  
as a Father of the American Revolution

FRANCIS JENNINGS, Cedar Crest College  
The Imperial Revolution: The American Revolution  
as a Tripartite Struggle for Sovereignty

Comment: BARBARA GRAYMONT, Nyack College

9:15 p.m. There will be a Reception following the evening session.

February 11 (Saturday)

9:00 a.m.        Coffee

9:30 a.m.        Third Conference Session

Chairman: R. DAVID EDMUNDS, University of Wyoming, Fellow,  
The Newberry Library

JAMES AXTELL, Sarah Lawrence College  
The Unbroken Twig: The Revolution in Indian  
Education

JAMES O'DONNELL, Marietta College  
The World Turned Upside Down: The American  
Revolution as a Catastrophe for Native Americans

Comment: HELEN TANNER, Historian/consultant

2:00 p.m.        Fourth Conference Session

Chairman: D'ARCY McNICKLE, Director, The Newberry Library  
Center for the History of the American Indian

VINE DELORIA, Author  
Commentary -- The American Indian and the  
American Revolution: Problems in the Recovery  
of a Usable Past

## CONTENTS

Preface	ii
Conference program	iv
"The Image of the Indian in the Age of the American Revolution" by Reginald Horsman	1
"The Ideology of the Revolution and the American Indian" by Bernard W. Sheehan	12
"Comment on Horsman and Sheehan" by Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr.	24
"Savages are Heroes, Too, Whiteman!" by Mary E. Fleming Mathur	34
"The Imperial Revolution: The American Revolution as a Tripartite Struggle for Sovereignty" by Francis Jennings	42
Comment on Mathur and Jennings by Barbara Graymont	60
"The Unbroken Twig: The Revolution in Indian Education" by James Axtell	67
"The World Turned Upside Down: The American Revolution as a Catastrophe for Native Americans" by James H. O'Donnell	80
"The American Revolution and the American Indian: Problems in the Recovery of a Usable Past" by Vine Deloria, Jr.	94



# The Image of the Indian in the Age of the American Revolution

by

Reginald Horsman

American Indian policy in the hundred years after 1783 is as remarkable for its rhetoric as its brutality. From the 1790's there were always members of the government who spoke well of the Indians, argued that they could be assimilated within American society, and maintained that the government was achieving success in pursuing this end. The rhetoric was most persuasive and eloquent in the age of Jefferson. In 1785 he had argued that "The proofs of genius given by the Indians of N. America place them on a level with Whites in the same uncultivated state," and in 1809 he told the northwestern Indians: "In time you will be as we are: you will become one people with us; your blood will mix with ours: and will spread with ours over this great island." From the inauguration of the new government in 1789 its leaders maintained that the object of their policies was the civilization and assimilation of the Indians, and in the first decades of the nineteenth century it was repeatedly argued that this object was being attained.

While the rhetoric of Indian policy was optimistic, the reality was bleak. Land was taken from the Indians against their wishes, intermittent warfare swept the frontiers, and the pell mell advance of land hungry frontiersmen decimated the Indian tribes which lay in its path. The conflict between what was happening and what was said reached a peak by the 1830's when the ruthless expulsion of thousands of Indians from well-established farms was justified on the grounds that this would better assimilate them within white society. In the first decades of the nineteenth-century Indian policy, as it is described in Washington, and the actual conflict on America's frontiers frequently bear little relation to each other. The origins of this gulf in early American Indian policy must be sought in the Revolutionary era.

Historical writing on the Indian in the age of the Revolution has hardly clarified the significance of these years for the future failure of American Indian policy. Much of the difficulty is that most of the writing is on one of two levels. The most fashionable approach is that of the intellectual or literary historian who attempts to analyze the image of the Indian in European and American literature. A number of sophisticated studies have pointed out the various, at times conflicting, ways in which the Indian was depicted: as noble savage, as near devil, as dweller in the pastoral garden. Others have investigated the attempts of a minority of European naturalists to write of the deficiency of life in the New World, and of the manner in which American writers rushed to defend the Indian and their continent. There has been a particular interest in the way in which the view of the Indian as a devil-like bloodthirsty monster intertwined with the opposite view of the Indian as a noble savage. Usually, such studies have not dealt with the practical matters of the White-Indian frontier conflict, or the image of the Indian as depicted in the actual day-by-day correspondence from the frontier regions.

Obviously, there is a methodological problem here as well as a problem of individual interests; it is difficult to include the complex European and American literary sources with the material for actual contact and conflict along the Mohawk Valley, in Kentucky, or on the borders of Georgia.

A similar difficulty is created by the way in which much of the writing on actual Indian contact during the Revolutionary era ignores the problem of ideas. A great deal of the writing on actual border warfare is now old-fashioned. The traditional material on the Revolutionary frontier, written in the late nineteenth or the early decades of this century, stresses the heroism of White pioneers fighting off Indian attacks, not the significance of these events for future White-Indian relations. And where more recent material on actual contact and conflict is available, the greater sophistication tends to be in attempting to see the Indian point of view rather than in analyzing the problem of White attitudes and policy formation. Sources, of course, again become a major problem. For all the difficulties in interpretation, there is simply more abundant evidence available for analyzing the attitudes of Thomas Jefferson or William Robertson toward the Indian than those of Simon Kenton or Benjamin Logan. It is even more difficult to analyze the attitudes of those numerous unnamed pioneers who trudged westward over the Cumberland Gap, or perched precarious cabins in the valleys of western Pennsylvania.

Yet, for all the problems of evidence, the course of American Indian policy in the years after the Revolution cannot be understood unless the views of the European/American intellectual elite are balanced out by an analysis of the attitudes of those in actual contact with the Indian. Although European and American intellectuals were ambivalent in their thinking toward the Indian, the subtle shifts and changes in their thinking are in the long run less important for the failure of American policy than the more obvious gulf between the intellectual and the popular pioneer view of the Indian. Any chance of bridging this gap collapsed in the bloody frontier clashes of the Revolutionary era.

The prevailing intellectual view of the Indian in both Europe and America was an optimistic one. At the basis of intellectual optimism toward the Indian was the Enlightenment view that all mankind was of one species, and that mankind in general was capable of indefinite improvement. If the Indians were of the same innate capacity as the Europeans then their existing "savage" state could well be regarded as temporary. Although some observers, such as Bernard Romans and Lord Kames, were prepared to argue that the Indians were of a separate species, these men were not in the main line of learned opinion in either Europe or the United States. The prevailing view was that environment, not innate racial difference, accounted for the distinctions in condition.

Some, of course, were prepared to go further and argue not merely that the Indians were in a savage state and capable of improvement, but that the state in which they were existing was a peculiarly felicitous one. The idea of the Indian as a noble savage, demonstrating in his splendid simplicity the weaknesses and vices of an effete Europe, was a concept more of the creative writers than of the natural scientists of the eighteenth century, but this image also

permeated a variety of other works, even those of many travelers and observers who purported to be giving an accurate description of Indian life. In practical terms, however, the image of the Indian as a noble savage to be admired and even emulated was less important for the actual shaping of an American Indian policy than the ideas of those who saw the Indian as an improvable being who could and should be taught the virtues of the American way of life. The idea of progress inherent in the Enlightenment took on a peculiarly powerful form in the United States as the Revolution succeeded. American leaders argued that they had thrown off the corruptions of Europe, that they were actively engaged in creating a better world, and that they were offering the Indians a cleansed version of European civilization. The impact of the ideas of the Enlightenment, with their American modifications, was of particular importance because so many of the early American governmental leaders were fully aware of, and even contributed to, the most important eighteenth-century trans-Atlantic intellectual currents. Men who were intellectuals as well as politicians were decisive in the formulation of the theoretical basis of early American Indian policy.

The intellectual and literary view was not, of course, all favorable to the Indian. The idea of the devil-inspired Indian savage, so powerful in the seventeenth century, continued in the eighteenth century, and was frequently disseminated in the popular captivity literature. Also, many eighteenth-century accounts either balanced, or claimed to be balancing, the divergent views of the Indian as 'noble' or 'savage' by giving a supposedly impartial list of virtues and vices; neither necessarily reflected the reality of Indian mores, but rather reflected the traditions that had inspired them. But, in general, American intellectuals were sensitive to any European attacks on the Indian which denigrated the New World as a whole. When Buffon and De Pauw wrote of the degeneracy of animal life in the New World, and of the Indian as an inferior form of mankind, they were vigorously rebutted by Americans who thought of America as an arena for the general improvement of mankind, not its debasement. As the attack on the Indian by the European believers in degeneracy was part of a general attack on the New World, it had to be rebutted by patriotic Americans anxious to defend their continent and their new country.

American leaders of the Revolutionary generation were intent that Europe and the rest of the world should admire this continent and its new experiment in government. When Jefferson wrote his Notes on Virginia in the last years of the Revolution he could ignore the massive problems facing the country, and the Indian warfare sweeping its borders, in order to rebut European views of Indian degeneracy. Himself untouched by frontier violence, he rose above the practical problems of the moment to engage in an intellectual argument. In a similar manner, Secretary of War Henry Knox could rise above the frontier conflicts of the early 1790's to write of the international and historical implications of American Indian policy. Knox feared that American expansion over Indian land would be viewed as a sordid episode by dispassionate observers. "How different," wrote Knox in 1789, "would be the sensation of a philosophic mind to reflect, that, instead of exterminating a part of the human race by our modes of population, we had persevered, through all difficulties, and at last

imparted our knowledge of cultivation and the arts to the aboriginals of the country, by which the source of future life and happiness had been preserved and extended." Later, in January 1793, he told General Anthony Wayne that "if our modes of population and War destroy the tribes, the disinterested part of mankind and posterity will be apt to class the effects of our Conduct and that of the Spaniards in Mexico and Peru together."

Those Americans who lived on the eastern seaboard, and thought in Atlantic or even universal terms, were able to separate the practical horrors and violence of border warfare from the theoretical problems of Indian relations. They often had a sense of perspective which enabled them to see the violence and faults of the American frontiersmen, and to observe that the Indians were fighting to protect their lands and their families. This did not mean that the American leaders were prepared, or even wanted, to stop the frontier advance, but they wished, if possible, to work out policies which would protect the international and historical reputation of the United States. The leaders of the early seventeenth century had seen the Indians as souls to be saved, the leaders of the post-Revolutionary generation saw the Indians as fellow human beings who could be raised in the scale of human society. Above all else they wanted a prosperous, powerful, expanding America, but it was an America in which they could envisage transformed Indians; Indians who would be indistinguishable in their mores from the farmers who surrounded them. The leadership of the United States until 1829 came from the eastern seaboard, and as they viewed the illimitable regions of the West they could see no reason why the advance of White settlers across the continent could not be compatible with the presence of Indians who had been transformed from savagery to civilization. It was in thinking of a future America in which there would be transformed Indians that the eastern intellectual and political elite differed most sharply from those hundreds of thousands of Americans who were engaged in carving new states out of this continent, and who won increasing political power in the forty years after the Revolution.

The greater detachment of the East had been made possible by the advance of settlement out of the coastal plain into the piedmont, and ultimately into and across the Appalachians. In the eighteenth century a new and non-frontier America developed along the eastern seaboard. As Indian dangers disappeared a settled way of life developed, and intellectuals were given the leisure and detachment to comment dispassionately on the views of the European theorists. For many the frontier stage of colonial society had passed, and theory could replace the day-by-day dangers of living. Yet, by the middle of the eighteenth century, a renewed Indian struggle to protect their lands developed on a frontier which had by now become detached from the eastern centers of population. The Anglo-French struggles of the mid-1740's to 1760 were deeply entwined in Indian warfare, Pontiac's War renewed it in 1763, and from Dunmore's War in 1774 to Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers in 1794 there were constant and bloody border struggles. In the West the conflicts of the Revolution continued unabated after the achievement of independence. As American pioneers pushed further and further from the eastern centers of population, they felt increasingly neglected by the eastern elite: Scots-Irish in Pennsylvania attacked the pacifism of Quaker leaders,

frontiersmen in the valleys of east Tennessee saw little merit in a North Carolina government that neglected their defense, and Kentuckians were to take matters into their own hands as they despaired of help from Virginia.

The Revolution was a vital factor in convincing the westerners that they had to look after their own interests. The British-Indian alliance isolated many settlements from eastern support, armies were needed to meet the British campaigning on the eastern seaboard, and frontiersmen felt alone as they organized to meet Indian attacks which benefited from British support. In a great arc from New York to Georgia, Indian tribes were to take advantage of the Revolution and British support to protect their lands and drive out the hated farmers who were encroaching with increasing rapidity on their villages, fields, and hunting grounds. As a result, literally thousands of settlers were to be killed, carried into captivity, and in some cases tortured, during a twenty-year period. The border warfare of the Revolution had a compelling effect on the pioneers and their descendants. The heroes and villains of this struggle were to fill the popular literature and pioneer histories of the next hundred years. The horrors of the Wyoming Valley, the heroes of Boonesborough, the disaster at Blue Licks became a vital part of the history and mythology of the next generations. Essential to this legacy was a deep hatred of the Indians with whom the frontiersmen had contended. When in 1794 the new territorial assembly of Tennessee petitioned Congress for a declaration of war on the Creeks and Cherokees they stated that there was scarcely "a man of this body, but can recount a dear wife or child, and aged parent or near relation, massacred by the hands of these blood-thirsty nations, in their houses or fields." The assembly reminded Congress that "citizens who live in poverty on the extreme frontiers, were as entitled to be protected in their lives, their families and little property, as those who were in luxury, ease and affluence in the great and opulent eastern cities." These men were not prepared to listen to the ideas of Henry Knox on the necessity for the gradual, patient, understanding amelioration of the savage condition, nor did they engage in deep thought on the basic reasons for Indian attacks and resistance.

From the eve of the Revolution through the 1790's the hatred of frontiersmen for the Indians, and their unwillingness to accept compromise, perturbed even the army officers who commanded western posts. Arthur St. Clair, the first governor of the Northwest territory, and commander of the most disastrous of all American expeditions against the Indians, for twenty years was a persistent critic of frontier attitudes and of uncontrolled expansion. In the spring of 1774 he wrote to the governor of Pennsylvania from Fort Ligonier, mentioned the difficulties he was experiencing because of the murder of a Delaware Indian, and commented that "It is the most astonishing thing in the world, the disposition of the common people of this country; actuated by the most savage cruelty, they wantonly perpetrate crimes that are a disgrace to humanity, and seem at the same time to be under a kind of religious enthusiasm, whilst they want the daring spirit that usually inspires." St. Clair did not alter this view of the ordinary frontiersmen. While at Fort Harmar on the Ohio River in 1788 he requested federal troops to protect Senecas coming down the river for treaty negotiations, as he feared they would

be attacked by settlers along the river. St. Clair despaired of peace with the Indians. He commented in the same year in Pittsburgh that "Our settlements are extending themselves so fast on every quarter where they can be extended; our pretensions to the country they inhabit have been made known to them [the Indians] in so unequivocal a manner, and the consequences are so certain and so dreadful to them, that there is little probability of there ever being any cordiality between us."

The views entertained by St. Clair after his long experience in western Pennsylvania and on the Ohio were confirmed by other observers in the same region. In 1777, when Congress was particularly anxious to keep peace on the borders, Colonel George Morgan wrote to John Hancock that parties of settlers had gathered to massacre even friendly Indians at their hunting grounds, and that it was "not uncommon to hear even those who ought to know better, express an ardent desire for an Indian war, on account of the fine lands those poor people possess." Another soldier, William Irvine, tried to understand the hatred that led to the massacre of the peaceful Christian Indians in eastern Ohio in 1782. Men, women, and children were herded into a church, and were systematically slaughtered, not in the heat of battle, but in a cold-blooded, methodical series of executions. Irvine was obviously shocked by all this, but he asked his wife not to express any opinion openly because he feared that this would be taken as his opinion. "People who have had Fathers, Mothers, Brothers or Children butchered, tortured, scalped by the savages," wrote Irvine, reasoned "very differently on the subject of killing the Moravians to what people who live in the interior part of the country in safety do--their feelings are very different."

As the Indian warfare along the Ohio outlasted the Revolution the feelings became increasingly bitter. As late as 1791 another report from Fort Pitt stated that a party of volunteer militia had killed four friendly Indians--three men and a woman. "Although this action appears very much like deliberate murder," wrote Major Issac Craig, "yet it is approved of, I believe, by a majority of the people on the Ohio." To these frontiersmen the Indians were not suitable subjects for philanthropic experiment, indeed they were hardly regarded as fellow members of the human species. When a dead Indian was picked up after a clash outside Marietta, the body was given to the surgeons who "hired an old soldier to boil the flesh from the bones in a kettle on the bank of the Muskingum, to make a skeleton."

The bitterness and hatred of the settlers along the Upper Ohio was felt in full measure along the edges of the frontier from the devastated Wyoming Valley to Georgia. In Kentucky and Tennessee the settlers for twenty years faced the hostility of Indians who well realized the meaning of the White thrust across the Appalachians. Kentucky was a beleaguered outpost in the American Revolution. Isolated forts and cabins held on against a succession of Indian and British-led attacks. In 1779 the Kentucky residents petitioned the Virginia House of Assembly to relieve their distress. After being "exposed to all the Barberous ravages of inhuman savage [*sic*]" for four years, they argued, they had scarcely cattle left to supply their families. Indian attacks against Kentucky continued throughout the Revolution, and as late as 1787 the inhabitants of Bourbon County petitioned to have the county divided because it was so dangerous to

travel forty miles on county business. Moreover, they argued, "from being so much expos'd to the inroads of the Savages they have not a horse left for every tenth man."

By the 1780's the Kentuckians hated the Indians with a passion. When in 1786 Colonel Benjamin Logan led an expedition northward across the Ohio to attack Indian villages, the friendly Shawnee chief Moluntha was murdered although he came forward to greet the Kentuckians carrying the American flag and holding out the articles of the United States-Shawnee treaty signed earlier that year. Major John Hamtramck's comment in 1790 was that even if a treaty could be signed that spring "the people of our frontier will certainly be the first to break it. The people of Kentucky will carry on private expeditions against the Indians and kill them whenever they meet them, and I do not believe there is a jury in all Kentucky who would punish a man for it.... The thirst of war is the dearest inheritance an Indian receives from his parents, and vengeance that of the Kentuckians, hostility must then be the result on both sides."

The Kentucky attitudes were echoed throughout Tennessee. Although the inhabitants of eastern Tennessee wrought terrible devastation on Cherokee towns in the Revolution, both they and the pioneers in the new settlements along the Cumberland were exposed to extensive attacks from both Cherokees and Creeks. As in Kentucky, these attacks did not end with the Revolution, and by the mid-1780's the continuous dangers and deaths produced a bitterness that could not be eradicated. John Sevier in 1785 wrote to the governor of North Carolina to excuse the murderer of an Indian. "I can't pretend to say what he might have done," wrote Sevier, "but must believe, that had any other person met with the same insult from one of those bloody savages, who have so frequently murdered the wives and children of the people of this country for many years past, I say had they been possessed of that manly and soldierly spirit that becomes an American, they must have acted like Hubbard." A basic motive in attempting to create the independent state of Franklin in the mid-1780's was the feeling that the inhabitants of eastern Tennessee had been deserted by the North Carolinians who did not understand the perils of frontier life. One resident defended the separation movement with the comment that the Franklinites "say that North-Carolina has not treated us like a parent, but like a step-dame. She means to sacrifice us to the Indian savages."

Any hope that the frontiersmen would accept the enlightened doctrines regarding Indian potential and progress disappeared in the battles of these years. When British observer John Smyth said that "The white Americans also have the most rancorous antipathy to the whole race of Indians; and nothing is more common than to hear them talk of extirpating them totally from the face of the earth, men, women, and children," his remarks well fitted the views of any of those who had suffered from Indian attacks. The French soldier Chastellux expressed a similar opinion when he said that the reason the inhabitants of New York had taken up arms and displayed courage was that they were "animated by an inveterate hatred against the Indians, whom the English always sent ahead of their own armies."

For the most part the common people and their frontier leaders who hated the Indians did not express their philosophy in any coherent manner. It is not easy to write the intellectual history of the

inarticulate. The one spokesman who perhaps permits a more searching look into frontier attitudes is Hugh Henry Brackenridge. Brackenridge was the first prominent literary figure of the trans-Appalachian West. His novel Modern Chivalry achieved great popularity beyond the mountains although it was never of comparable reputation along the eastern seaboard. Brackenridge was raised in York County, Pennsylvania, and educated at Princeton, but the major part of his career was spent in Pittsburgh. It has been suggested that possibly some of his anti-Indian prejudice stemmed from witnessing Indian attacks in York County; certainly his experiences in Pittsburgh after 1781 confirmed his prejudices. Even before he moved to Pittsburgh he attacked the idea that the Indians should have a right "to a soil which they have never cultivated," and wrote of the Indians as "sunk beneath the dignity of human nature," though they "bear resemblance and are seen in the shape of men." His attacks took on a particular virulence, however, after he moved to Pittsburgh.

The incident that confirmed Brackenridge in unremitting hostility toward the Indians was the death by torture of Colonel William Crawford in 1782. This episode epitomized for many frontiersmen all the horrors of Indian war and captivity. Crawford, a prominent figure in western Pennsylvania, in 1782 led an expedition against the Indian towns at Sandusky in what is now northern Ohio. His expedition was routed, Crawford was captured, and the massacre of the Christian Indians was avenged. Crawford was tortured to death by fire over several hours. This, of course, had happened to many others, but Crawford was well-known, and two who escaped from the Indians gave detailed accounts in which was included a vivid description of the torture death of Crawford. It was this description which transformed Simon Girty, who was present at the torture scene and taunted Crawford, from being one of a number of frontier renegades into the classical villain of the Revolutionary frontier.

Brackenridge arranged for the publication of the two accounts. In his letter transmitting the narratives for publication he made his famous remark that he was also adding some observations on "the animals vulgarly called Indians.... Having an opportunity to know something of the character of this race of men, from the deeds they perpetrate daily round me." The introduction to the book form of the narratives stated that they might be useful in inducing the government to take some steps to chastise and suppress the Indians, "and from hence they will see that the nature of an Indian is fierce and cruel, and that an extirpation of them would be useful to the world, and honorable to those who can effect it."

The continued wars of the 1780's simply confirmed in Brackenridge, and in other frontiersmen, their misconceptions about the nature of the Indians. To these frontiersmen, the Indians were savage beasts. When in 1786 Congress appointed a superintendent for the Indians north of the Ohio, Brackenridge commented that he doubted the Indian 'savages' could be restrained by the giving of presents: "It would be for the good of the country if, when the blankets and leggins come, the superintendent would give them to some of the poor women and children whose husbands and fathers have been murdered in the war." Brackenridge was prepared to take issue with those who wrote in praise of the Indians. "I consider men who are unacquainted with the savages, like young women who have read romances, and have as



improper an idea of the Indian character in the one case, as the female mind has of real life in the other. The philosopher, weary of the vices of refined life, thinks to find perfect virtue in the simplicity of the unimproved state." Brackenridge saw no such virtue.

If the American union had remained as it was in 1783, the attitudes of American pioneers might well have been of less importance in the evolution of American Indian policy. But out of the 1780's came the concept of an expanding federal union, of more states to be added on an equal basis to the original thirteen. Between 1791 and 1821 eleven new states were to be formed out of the areas fought over by the Indians and the American frontiersmen. Moreover, in a state such as Georgia, which in 1783 was still almost completely in the hands of the Indians, practical relations with the Creeks and Cherokees were to dominate state history for the next forty years. The Indian policy of Washington, Jefferson, and Monroe was often based on ideas of improvability stemming from the eighteenth-century Enlightenment but it was actually shaped by the resistance and pressure of the frontier states and their inhabitants.

Historians have often laid great stress on the ambivalence of intellectual thinking about the Indian, on how the view of the Indian as savage contrasted with the view of the Indian as a man of noble, simple virtues. Of greater immediate and practical importance was that the view of the Indian as an expendable savage permeated general thinking in so many of those states that confronted the Indians from 1775 to 1815. The rhetoric of improvability and assimilation did not convince the Georgians or the Tennesseans. They did not want a government civilization policy that perpetuated Indians on their lands. They wanted to expel Indians not transform them. The Indian policy developed by Washington, Knox, and Jefferson was unacceptable to those states with any sizable number of Indian inhabitants.

In the immediate post-Revolutionary years even the American eastern leadership accepted a policy of naked force, but when after 1789 these leaders increasingly turned to a policy that tried to combine expansion with permanent occupancy by transformed Indians then the resistance of the new frontier states became a major factor in the failure of American Indian policy. The type of measured advance and civilization policy advocated after 1789 was constantly thwarted by the Indian-hating attitudes not only of the cutting edge of the American frontier but also of those new states that were passing beyond the frontier stage. Although the federal government spoke with confidence of civilization policies, and of an advance that would benefit both White and Indian, they constantly adjusted their policies to suit frontier demands for a more rapid advance and a more direct use of force. The federal government never solved the problem of how to resist the pressures of its own new states and their Indian-hating populations. Although federal troops were used to eject settlers violating Indian boundary lines, the government forced the Indians into further cessions as soon as political pressure became severe. The ultimate response to the pressure of those states with sizable Indian populations was Indian Removal, which was not a policy carefully shaped to best implement the ideals of federal policy but rather a yielding to those states who refused to accept Indians, whether or not they had accepted American cultural values, as their neighbors.

In its Indian policy, as in so many other areas of American life, the United States from the time of the Revolution began the process of reshaping its European and colonial intellectual heritage to suit the needs of a new, expanding nation state. Eighteenth-century optimism regarding the Indian flourished among those Americans most influenced by and involved in trans-Atlantic intellectual trends. This cosmopolitan view permeated the thinking of many of the leaders of the early American government, but those American empire builders engaged in the westward advance were developing a more peculiarly American view of the Indian based more on emotional reaction than on intellectual theorizing. These empire builders rejected European assumptions as they carved new states in the wilderness. The trans-Atlantic ideas of the eighteenth century long lingered on as empty rhetoric, or as literary convention, but the practical politics of Indian relations were dominated by the realities of the frontier advance, and the more pragmatic views of American frontiersmen. The inhabitants of the new states felt by their battles and by their sufferings they had won the right to all the land within their borders. The most telling legacy of the eighteenth century and the Revolution was not the idea of improvability and progress stemming from the Enlightenment but rather the violent hatreds and irreconcilable differences created by the frontier advance and violent warfare.

### Further Reading

There is a considerable literature on the intellectual and literary view of the Indian, and on the actual details of frontier conflict in the Revolution, but comparatively little on frontier images and their interrelationship with actual policy.

Views of the Indian in the entire colonial period and post-Revolutionary America to 1850 are analyzed in Roy Harvey Pearce, Savagism and Civilization: A Study of the Indian and the American Mind (Baltimore, 1967). He emphasizes how contact with the Indians helped the Europeans in America define their self-image. There is also considerable information on attitudes toward the Indian in Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, Conn., 1973). Although Bernard W. Sheehan, Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1973) concentrates on the first of three decades of the nineteenth century his work has considerable relevance for eighteenth-century attitudes.

European attitudes and their impact in America can be found in several of the essays in the Edward Dudley and Maximillian E. Novak, ed., The Wild Man Within: An Image in Western Thought from the Renaissance to Romanticism (Pittsburgh, 1973). The whole subject of degeneracy in America, as well as a variety of other intellectual trends, is considered in Antonello Gerbi, The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900 (rev. ed., trs. by Jeremy Moyle, Pittsburgh, 1973).

Much of the writing on frontier warfare in the Revolution is discussed in the bibliography to Jack M. Sosin, The Revolutionary Frontier, 1763-1783 (New York, 1967). The Ohio Valley region is treated in detail in Randolph C. Downes, Council Fires on the Upper Ohio: A Narrative of Indian Affairs in the Upper Ohio Valley until 1795 (Pittsburgh, 1940). Recent studies on particular areas are James H. O'Donnell, III, Southern Indians in the American Revolution (Knoxville, 1973), and Barbara Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution (Syracuse, N.Y., 1972).

A traditional study of governmental policies in the Revolutionary years is Walter H. Mohr, Federal Indian Relations, 1774-1788 (Philadelphia, 1933). The policies that arose out of the Revolution are discussed in Reginald Horsman, Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812 (East Lansing, Mich., 1967), and Francis P. Prucha, American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Indian Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834 (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

712-04-01

## The Ideology of the Revolution and the American Indian

by

Bernard W. Sheehan

White men discovered themselves at the expense of the American Indian. From the earliest period of contact, explorers and colonists sought to clarify the image of the Indian when in fact the real problem was the White man's perception of himself. By imposing the doctrine of savagism on native society, Europeans denied the Indian any real social character. Savagism identified the Indian with the zero of human existence -- a point at which history had not begun and culture had yet to be formed. In its noble formulation of savagism, the native American occupied a vague ideal condition from which the White man had fallen and to which he wished to return. As an ignoble savage the Indian posed an obstacle that would have to be cleared for the advance of civilization, but he also represented the antithesis of civilized life, the nadir against which white men could measure their accomplishments. The White man's tendency to deal in universal concepts could only obscure the real Indian. In truth it helped very little in revealing the real White man. What it did create was a complex mythology of the frontier through which White men attempted to explain the nature of the New World and the character of the people who lived in it.<sup>2</sup> That process reached a culmination of sorts in the revolutionary experience of the late eighteenth century. The colonists made their profoundest effort at self realization by breaking decisively with Europe and by explaining their decision in universal terms. The native tribesmen took part in the conflict caused by that decision, and the Americans drew on their perception of the Indians in the formulation of a revolutionary ideology.

Every aspect of Indian-White relations was fraught with irony but perhaps none more so than the tendency of many Americans to see the development of a national identity as in some sense an imitation of native ways.<sup>3</sup> The irony lay in the tension between imitation and independence. Seeking to be himself, a separate entity distinct from his European forebears, the American imitated another people whom he sometimes held in even lower regard than Europeans. Of course this seldom required duplicating the behavior of real Indians. It was enough that White men attempted the realization of their own perceptions of the natives. Moreover this process of Indianization took place simultaneously with a determined effort to destroy native life by submerging it in the White man's world.

The strongest evidence in support of the existence of this tendency could be found in the transformation of European warfare in the New World. It was widely believed that the new continent demanded the abandonment of formal European methods and the adoption of tactics akin to those employed by the American tribes. Any hope of success in conflict with the Indians rested on the skill of the Whites in manipulating the distinctive environment of the wilderness. The important role played by native allies in the long imperial wars seemed to establish the legitimacy of the native mode of war. When the revolutionary conflict erupted, both sides protested their

reluctance to employ native contingents. But both sides also perceived<sup>4</sup> the utility of doing so, and the Indians soon joined the conflict.

At the beginning of the Revolution much of the literature dealing with the problem of Indian war concerned the last imperial conflict and Pontiac's uprising. Two texts seem particularly pertinent: William Smith's description of Bouquet's expedition, which contains a treatise on forest warfare by Thomas Hutchins, and the Journals of Robert Rogers.<sup>5</sup> Smith contrasted Bouquet's success with the failure of Braddock because he had refused to conform his tactics to American conditions. Hutchins drew the lessons from this experience. He recommended the creation of a corps of wilderness fighters who would contest with the tribesmen on their own ground. This was the only way to win an Indian war. Hutchins couched his description of the native warriors in the formulas of the state of nature and savagism which he saw as the basis for their great proficiency in the wilderness.<sup>6</sup> The conclusion could easily be drawn that the White man should comport himself as a savage if he wished to survive in America. Robert Rogers, it seemed, had already proved the value of Hutchins' scheme. He and his men had ranged the woods during the French and Indian War, penetrated French territory, harassed the enemy's communications, and dealt the St. Francis Indians a terrible blow. All this furnished convincing evidence that American warfare had moved closer to the native style in fact and that it had done so in conformity to the ideals of savagism.

Yet the story was not so simple. Had it been, one could have expected a good deal less American concern about the intrusion of the Indians into the war for independence. The writings of Smith, Hutchins, and Rogers need not be interpreted as evidence that Americans had determined on a conscious policy of Indianization. Bouquet did not win the battle at Bushy Run by emulating the natives. He was a European-trained officer whose virtues were careful preparation and resourcefulness in a difficult situation. He won the battle because he left his cumbersome baggage behind at Fort Ligonier; he held his troops together and protected them when the Indians attacked; and the enemy fell into his trap when he feigned retreat. Bouquet respected the ability of the warriors, though he entertained a very low opinion of the general character of the American war. Hutchins, no doubt, intended a scheme to defeat the Indians at their own game. But he obviously felt the need to justify his proposals from non-American sources. He supported his plan by recounting the experiences of the Romans against the "light troops" they encountered in Africa. The reasons for a change in tactics seemed entirely practical and not ideological.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore his little treatise read like a European military handbook. The instructions were concise and to the point, and offered largely without sentiment. They contained a diagram for the construction of a camp and the disposition of troops and baggage on the march fully worthy of a Continental military engineer.<sup>11</sup> Although Rogers's description of his Indian-like behavior during the war with the French seemed to support the Indianization thesis, his attitudes were strongly anti-Indian. He massacred the St. Francis not only because they were allied with the French, but also because they had for years ravaged the English frontier, scalping and murdering women and children. Although he fought in the Indian

manner, he expressed the strongest opposition to the character of that warfare.<sup>12</sup>

The experience of the last imperial war holds meaning for the American attitudes toward the Indians in the Revolution. When most of the tribes chose the British side, American thinking was virtually unanimous in condemning the British for allying themselves with savages and explicit in distinguishing the ways of civilized conflict from the habits of the tribal warriors. In the years after the war, signs of growing sympathy began to appear. Benjamin Franklin noted that "almost every War between the Indians and the Whites has been occasion'd by some Injustice of the latter toward the former." And a politician as disinterested as Alexander Hamilton announced that the Indians would surely support the European powers "because they have most to fear from us and most to hope from them."<sup>13</sup> During the Revolution, however, spokesmen from the new republic manifested little objectivity in appraising the problems of Indian-White relations.

Jefferson set the theme in the Declaration of Independence. Among the king's many crimes, he had "endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers the merciless Indian savages, whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions." True to Jefferson's accusation, the British then went on "to let loose those blood Hounds to scalp Men and butcher Women and children."<sup>14</sup> Franklin thought the charge of sufficient propaganda value to concoct a "Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle" which purported to be a message to the king from the Senecas. The message begged the king to aid the tribesmen to find new lands within the empire, and it was supposedly accompanied by an assortment of American scalps. Franklin commented to Adams that he had reason to doubt the veracity of the form but not the substance of the document, because he believed "the Number of People actually scalp'd in this murdering war by the Indians to exceed what is mentioned in the invoice."<sup>15</sup>

The Whigs made use of the issue in the internal war against the Loyalists. Indeed both sides blamed the other for engaging savage allies, though the Whigs seem to have had the better of the exchange. Rumors were rife that the Loyalists and Indians would spread devastation on the frontier. Broad sides and poetry depicted the horror of Indian war.

Oh, cruel Savages! what hearts of steel!  
O cruel Britons! who no pity feel!  
Where did they get the knife, the cruel blade?  
From Britain it was sent, where it was made.  
The tom-hawk and the murdering knife were sent  
To barbarous Savages for this intent.

Yes, they were sent, e'en from the British throne.

When two Indians from Burgoyne's command murdered Jan McCread, the issue seemed to be settled: savage war could not be controlled, even by the civilized men who employed it.<sup>16</sup>

Under the circumstances the Whigs found it easy to equate the British and the loyalists with savages even when the Indians took no part in the conflict. As one commentator described the British actions at Lexington: "With a cruelty and barbarity, which would have made the worst hardened savage blush, they shed INNOCENT BLOOD!"<sup>17</sup> Ethan Allen seemed to believe that the British were every bit as

savage as the Indians.<sup>18</sup> As the war proceeded, the same extravagant rhetoric that had once been reserved for the Indians became more readily applicable to the British and their German mercenaries.

Jefferson's treatment of Henry Hamilton, the British commander at Detroit captured by George Rogers Clark in 1779, placed the American attitude toward savage war on a new level. The implications of the American position had long been clear. The intensity of the language used and the pervasiveness of the opinions certainly belied the possibility that the patriots were reacting simply to their own failure to attract the loyalty of the native tribes. On the contrary they believed that British policy struck at the very heart of the republican endeavor. The revolutionaries identified their cause with the advance of civilization. Separated from the decadence of Europe, whiggish Americans believed that the survival of civilized existence hinged upon the success of their efforts. In addition, revolutionary rhetoric revealed an affinity for the most universalist modes of thought. The republican order that struggled to survive against British tyranny transcended the immediate social and political conditions of civilized life. In great measure it drew its justification from the conviction that the American policy constituted a singular human accomplishment, one that existed because based upon timeless and universal principles.<sup>19</sup> Savage warriors menaced this new republic not only because they made themselves a real obstacle to its advance, but also because their very existence seemed an affront to republican order. In this sense the qualities of savagery were the antithesis of civilized existence. Thus Americans reacted vehemently to the British use of native auxiliaries and Jefferson could find no tolerance for Colonel Henry Hamilton.

He accused the British officer of sending bands of warriors against the frontier settlements, knowing that the Indians would kill civilians and women and children, and with buying White scalps. Crimes of this sort implicated Hamilton in a conspiracy against civilization itself. Hence Jefferson refused to grant him the usual courtesies shown to a defeated officer. He was brought to Williamsburg in shackles and housed in the common jail. The treatment, in Jefferson's mind, fully accorded with the justice due to one who had abandoned civilized limits.<sup>20</sup>

Yet the savage who threatened the new Arcadian republic remained only part of the White man's image of the Indian. The vision of nature common in the later years of the eighteenth century, the American tendency to believe that society in the New World possessed a simplicity and discipline that distinguished it from Europe, and the consequent habit of judging European civilization harshly when compared with America, all involved a contrary conception of the Indian. At the same time that he threatened the success of the American attempt to establish an independent republic, the Indian represented the ideal that supplied much of the substance of that republic.

The new republic and the Indian both derived meaning from their distinctive setting: the American wilderness. Since the age of discovery nature had been conceived of in two ways, as a wilderness and as a paradise. In the late eighteenth century the beginnings of romantic sentiment and reaction to the European theory of American degeneration led to an increase in paradisaic opinion.<sup>21</sup> In an

immediate sense the Indian obtained little benefit from this development. He remained a dangerous savage. After the creation of the republic, when the tribes seemed less of a threat, paradism and noble savagism were to have profound effects on Indian-White relations.<sup>22</sup> This tendency began in the revolutionary era, although in the turmoil of the war Americans frequently found it easier to view the Indian as an incongruity in paradise.

The association of the wilderness with a distinctive American character took on new meaning in the 1760s after the French had been driven from the continent. As the dispute with Britain became more acute, the Americans tended to fall back on the qualities that made them different, particularly an untamed wilderness of incalculable potential. The rise of the natural rights argument and the increasing American reliance on universal definitions required a method for explaining the varieties and apparent anomalies in nature. The theory of environmentalism supplied the mechanism and drew the attention of Americans to the natural world. Instead of taming the wilderness in order to build civilization, the Americans found it easier to envision civilization growing out of wilderness conditions and retaining many of the distinctive qualities that inhered in nature in its untouched state.<sup>23</sup>

The account of Daniel Boone's life in the Kentucky forest, published in 1784 by John Filson but drawn from the experience of the Revolution, is a primary text in understanding the relations between the new republic and the wilderness. On entering Kentucky, Boone experienced the sublimity of pristine nature,<sup>24</sup> and Filson expressed his feeling in the conventional terminology. So intense was the impression that Boone, for the moment at least, compared civilized life (a "populous city, with all its varieties of commerce and stately structures") unfavorably to the unspoiled beauty of the region.<sup>25</sup> Yet nature was not in necessary opposition to civilization, at least not to the sort of civilization that Filson expected to see established in Kentucky. To be sure the images were mixed. Kentucky had been "lately an howling wilderness, the habitation of savages and wild beasts." But it was also a "second paradise" and would soon be a "fruitful field."<sup>26</sup> Kentucky would be the center of civilized life because of the sublimity and potential of its wilderness.

The fertile region, abound with all the luxuries of nature, stored with all the principal materials for art and industry, inhabited by virtuous and ingenious citizens, must universally attract the attention of mankind, being situated in the central part of the extensive American empire, ... where agriculture, industry, laws, arts and sciences, flourish; where afflicted humanity raises her drooping head; where springs a harvest for the poor; where conscience ceases to be a slave, and where laws are no more than the security of happiness; where nature makes reparation for having created man; and government, so long prostituted to the most criminal purposes, established an asylum<sup>27</sup> in the wilderness for the distressed of mankind.



Filson touched on the major motifs of the revolutionary experience. The centrality of the American empire offered a distinctive location for the great work the Americans could be expected to accomplish. The richness of the land and the genius of the people constituted the bases for material progress and would inevitably attract the attention of all mankind. But the American mission extended toward more exalted ends. The new republic will be a haven for art and science, where conscience will be free and where the poor and persecuted will find respite. This will all be realized because government will be limited to maintaining the public security and will not be prostituted as it has been in the past. With these checks upon the human lust for power, America will be an "asylum in the wilderness for the distressed of mankind." Hence the substance of the new republican order grew out of the immense potential of the wilderness. As one historian has put it: "... the American passion for liberty was an extension of the American passion to possess the earthly inheritance."<sup>28</sup>

Americans would finally transform the earthly inheritance, but first they would possess it -- in part, at least, by framing their politics according to a New World design. They saw parallels between the public arrangements of native life and the system they intended to establish. Surely there is meaning in the assertion of Cadwallader Colden that the Iroquois possessed "a perfect Republican government: Where no single Person has a power to compel, the Arts of Persuasion alone must prevail."<sup>29</sup> Jefferson's famous passage in the Notes on Virginia was even more extreme. The Indians "never submitted themselves to any laws, any coercive power, any shadow of government. Their only controuls are their manners, and that moral sense of right and wrong...." If the choice lay between the absence of law as with the Indians <sup>or</sup> too much law as in Europe, Jefferson would choose the Indian way.<sup>30</sup> Franklin had long since pointed to the Iroquois confederation as an illustration of the native capacity for political organization, one that the British colonies might emulate to their advantage. Otherwise it would be necessary to believe that the Indians had a deeper perception of their interests than did the colonists. Franklin had published the proceedings of the conference between the colonists and the Six Nations at Lancaster in 1744. The Iroquois spokesman chided the colonies for their lack of unity and pointed to the advantages that the League had bestowed on the Iroquois tribes. "Our wise forefathers," he said, "established Union and amity between the Five Nations; this has made us formidable; this has given us great Weight and Authority with our neighbouring Nations."<sup>31</sup> If the colonies would do the same they might reap the same advantages. Franklin noted elsewhere that public councils of the tribes were more decorous even than the proceedings of the Parliament,<sup>32</sup> an observation for which he could claim personal experience. Although the Americans did not create their union in direct imitation of any native political arrangement it is clear that eighteenth-century opinion held the political institutions of the Iroquois in particular in high regard.

Perhaps more significant, the least sentimental of Americans, John Adams, also stressed the importance of Indians' public life. In his Defence of the Constitutions, before turning to the Greeks, he dealt with the native tribes.

Every nation in North America has a king, a senate, and a people. The royal office is elective, but it is for life, his sachems are his ordinary council, where all the national affairs are deliberated and resolved in first instance; but in the greatest of all, which is declaring war, the king and sachems call a national assembly round a great council fire, communicate to their people their resolution, and sacrifice an animal. Those of the people who approve the war, partake of the sacrifice; throw the hatchet into a tree, after the example of the king; and join in the subsequent war songs and dances. Those who disapprove take no part in the sacrifice, but retire.<sup>33</sup>

For Adams, to be sure, it was not a question of duplicating another society's system of government but of discovering the political designs that have an "unalterable foundation in nature."<sup>34</sup> Obviously the Indians could in a rudimentary way do this as well as the British-Americans, and Adams found it easy to search in the American wilderness for examples of the discoveries he wished to impress upon his countrymen.

When Americans described the actual character of their new republican order, even when the reference was not to the Indians directly, the language invariably repeated the formulas of noble savagism. Many of the qualities that made a nation great, which the Americans drew from the classical ideal, were closely akin to those used to describe native life. Such rustic traits as simplicity, frugality, temperance, the martial qualities of virility, valor, and contempt for danger had long been considered major virtues of the native American before civilization had spoiled him.<sup>35</sup> In his disquisition on American warfare, Thomas Hutchins referred to the savage's innate "love of liberty." "Jealous of his independency and of his private property, he will not suffer the least encroachment on either; and upon the slightest suspicion, fired with resentment, he becomes an implacable enemy, he flies to arms to vindicate his right or revenge an injury."<sup>36</sup> Luxury was the great danger. Above all, Americans must avoid the voluptuous life that had corrupted Europe and cultivate a mode of existence fitting for the new continent. "If we wish to inherit the blessings of our Fathers" wrote Abigail Adams, "we should return a little more to their primitive Simplicity of Manners, and not sink into inglorious ease."<sup>37</sup> Even while engaged in a bitter struggle with the tribes, Americans fell naturally into the habit of describing their great revolutionary movements in terms similar to those used to depict native society.

The strength of this practice can be seen in the appeal many white men found in Indian oratory. Benjamin Franklin's famous collection of Indian speeches set the example.<sup>38</sup> He brought together the proceedings of a number of Indian conferences, which provided a fascinating example of how civilized men viewed the tribes in their most formal relations with the Whites. The collection presented the Indians as eloquent, wise, self-contained, clever, puckish, always through the medium of a contrived form of linguistic primitivism. Indians spoke simply and directly, without the affectations that

inhibited the White man's speech. Some few attributed to the Indians their own stilted form of oratory but most were attracted by the simplicity and naturalness of native speech. In the period after the Great Awakening, Calvinists were in the habit of comparing the kind of direct address they favored in their preaching with the unencumbered mode of the native people.<sup>39</sup> Jefferson was struck very early with the quality of Indian eloquence, and he included Logan's speech in his Notes on Virginia.<sup>40</sup> It seemed evident from the considerable interest in the subject that the new republic could find special meaning in the language of nature employed by the Indians.

The attractiveness of this sylvan eloquence testified to the drive for simplicity contained in the Americans' perception of their Revolution. The prevalence of universalist ideas, the avid eighteenth-century appetite for categorization, the apparent tendency of the revolutionary effort to culminate in the unity of the colonies, all these aspects of the movement seemed to anticipate an imminent paradisaic surcease in the perennial vexations of human existence. And yet it was inevitable that this reductionist perception should be set against the actual character of the revolutionary age. Old regimes disintegrated; new ones scarcely found time to claim stability before they were threatened by new dangers. Turmoil beset society in Europe and America. The result was a darker side to the ideology of the Revolution. Although ultimately the Declaration of Independence would express the meaning of the Revolution in tones of resonant confidence, much eighteenth-century thought described the human condition in the most fearful terms. Liberty seemed on the verge of collapse; corruption and conspiracy menaced the independence and stability of republican order. Even the optimism that derived from real achievements in science, medicine, technology, and improvements in material life brought in train new and more vexing problems. This process of modernization became subsumed under the rubric of luxury, which was no more than another manifestation of corruption. In suspecting a conspiracy of power and corruption, the revolutionary age manifested a profound anxiety over the consequences of its own actions. In such a perplexing situation, it became easy to oppose the afflictions of the present to the tranquility of another mode of life. Did not savage existence partake of the simplicity that all human beings craved? Were not the savages more content and less anxious than civilized men? Were they not healthier because they led more disciplined lives, unhampered by the luxury generated by civilization?<sup>41</sup> In the revolutionary era the answers seemed obvious.

Yet few Americans accepted the full primitivist doctrine. Philip Freneau was virtually alone in entertaining the more extreme fantasies that rejected civilization in favor of a virtually ethereal vision of native life. But even Freneau was of more than one mind, and he ended his long romance with noble savagism believing that the Indian was doomed to extinction.<sup>42</sup> Most Americans did not intend to become Indians, either the literary type that had become so familiar or the real kind that could be found in proximity to many of the settlements. Those who did foresake civilization for life among the tribes were a constant source of misgiving for the colonists who remained home.<sup>43</sup> Frontiersmen who strayed too far from the shelter and discipline of settled society were suspected of betrayal. But if the revolutionary generation did not despise civilization, it expressed many doubts

about certain of its qualities. The ideal could be found in Jefferson's agrarian empire or Crèvecoeur's pastoral garden.<sup>44</sup> The new republic occupied that middle ground which allowed it to keep the complexities of Europe and the simplicities of savagism at a respectable distance. In this state of suspension Americans used the images of savagism and civilization as they seemed convenient to maintain the equilibrium.

One cannot take Jefferson's exasperated exclamation to John Adams literally: "As for France and England, with all their pre-eminence in science, the one is a den of robbers, and the other of pirates. As if science produces no better fruits than tyranny, murder, rapine and destitution of national morality, I would rather wish our country to be ignorant, honest and estimable as our neighboring savages are."<sup>45</sup> Of course he was writing about Europe, not about native society. Presented with a real choice between White man's ways and the Indians', he would not have hesitated. The main distinction was between the new republic and Europe. The Indian was useful because he represented the starkest antithesis to civilization and hence reflected his virtues upon the new republic. Franklin fell into the same habit of relying on the native image against which to measure the defects of civilization. "Had I never been in the American colonies, but was to form my Judgment of Civil Society by what I have lately seen," he wrote after observing life among Scottish tenants, "I should never advise a Nation of Savages to admit of Civilization: For I assure you, that, in the Possession and Enjoyment of the various Comforts of Life, compar'd to these People every Indian is a Gentleman."<sup>46</sup> The praise was faint for obvious reasons. The Indian occupied the third position in the triad. First came the vices of Britain, then the virtues of America; the American served as the measure of judgment. But the Indian was not far behind.

It may be that few White men saw anything in native society that they cared to imitate precisely because few White men perceived the actualities of native culture. For the purposes of the Revolution the old formulas sufficed, even though the Indians took a real part in the conflict and the outcome had a critical bearing on the native future. When White men attacked the Indian rhetorically, they attacked a mythic demiurge, not the real Indian. When they called forth the image of the noble savage to indict their own world or to set off the distinctive qualities of the new republic against the corruption of Europe, they indulged their own fantasies at the Indian's expense. If it is true that the process of Americanization was in great measure a process of Indianization, it is only because the White man invented both the American and the Indian. The contest with Britain and the creation of a republic cost the real Indians dearly, but the Whites could find no reason to count the cost. They were embarked on a scheme that drew part of its meaning from a vision of the Indian but held no place for native society.

## Notes

1. Howard Mumford Jones, O Strange New World: American Culture in the Formative Years (New York, 1964), chs. I and II; Roy Harvey Pearce, The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization, rev. ed. (Baltimore, 1965), chs. III and IV; Elemire Zolla, The Writer and the Shaman: A Morphology of the American Indian (New York, 1973), p. 10, and chs. IV and V.
2. Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, Conn., 1973).
3. Ibid., 190.
4. Jack M. Sosin, "The Use of Indians in the War of the American Revolution: A Re-Assessment of Responsibility," Canadian Historical Review 46 (1965), 101-21; Don Higginbotham, The War of American Independence: Military Attitudes, Policies, and Practice, 1763-1789 (New York, 1971), 320-21.
5. [William Smith], Historical Account of Bouquet's Expedition Against the Ohio Indians, in 1764 (Cincinnati, 1868); Robert Rogers, Journals of Major Robert Rogers (Ann Arbor, 1966); Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence, 231-34, stresses the significance of these writings.
6. Smith, Historical Account, 95-99.
7. Rogers, Journals, 146-48.
8. Smith, Historical Account, 16-24.
9. Ibid., 19-20.
10. Ibid., 101-105.
11. Ibid., 127.
12. Rogers, Journals, 145, 154.
13. Benjamin Franklin to Samuel Elbert, Dec. 16, 1787, Albert Henry Smyth, ed., The Writings of Benjamin Franklin (New York, 1905-1907), IX, 625; Alexander Hamilton, "Federalist 24," Jacob E. Cooke, ed., The Federalist (Middletown, Conn., 1961), 156. See also, John Filson, The Discovery and Settlement of Kentucke (Ann Arbor, 1966), 66-67.
14. John Adams to James Warren, June 7, 1775, quoted in Frederick Melvin Binder, The Color Problem in Early American as Viewed by John Adams, Jefferson and Jackson (The Hague, 1968), 33.
15. Smyth, ed., Writings of Benjamin Franklin, VIII, 437-47; Franklin to John Adams, April 22, 1782, ibid., 433.
16. Philip Davidson, Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783 (Chapel Hill, 1941), 297, 372.
17. Jones, O Strange New World, 286.
18. Ethan Allen, A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity... (Philadelphia, 1779), 8, 26-27. See also Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence, 251-52.
19. Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), ch. VI.
20. Roderick Nash, Wilderness and the American Mind, rev. ed. (New Haven, 1973), ch. 3; Nash sees this as "a momentary relaxation of the dominant antipathy," ibid., 65; Arthur A. Ekirch, Jr., Man and Nature in America (New York, 1963), 13-17. Antonello Gerbi, The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, rev. ed. (Pittsburgh, 1973), 240-268.

22. Sheehan, Seeds of Extinction, ch. IV.
23. Winthrop D. Jordan, White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812 (Chapel Hill, 1968), 288-89; Sheehan, Seeds of Extinction, ch. I; Leo Marx, The American Revolution and the American Landscape (Washington, D. C., 1974), 6-17.
24. Filson, Discovery and Settlement of Kentucke, 52.
25. Ibid., 56.
26. Ibid., 49, 57.
27. Ibid., 108.
28. Charles L. Sanford, The Quest for Paradise: Europe and the American Moral Imagination (Urbana, 1961), 125-26.
29. Quoted by Wilbur R. Jacobs, "Cadwallader Colden's Noble Iroquois Savages," in Lawrence H. Leder, ed., The Colonial Legacy, III, 46.
30. Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, William Peden, ed. (Chapel Hill, 1955), 93.
31. Benjamin Franklin to James Parker, March 20, 1751, Leonard W. Labaree, et al., eds., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven, 1959- ), IV, 118-19; Julian P. Boyd, ed., Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin, 1736-1762 (Philadelphia, 1938), 78; William Christie Macleod, The American Indian Frontier (London, 1928), 227-79.
32. Benjamin Franklin, "Remarks concerning the Savages of North America," Smyth, ed., Writings of Benjamin Franklin, X, 99.
33. John Adams, "Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States...", Charles Francis Adams, ed., The Works of John Adams (Boston, 1851), IV, 566-67.
34. Ibid., 579.
35. Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, 1969), 52.
36. Smith, Historical Account, 95; see Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence, 233, and Jordan, White Over Black, 90-91.
37. Quoted in Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 24 (1967), 12.
38. Boyd, ed., Indian Treaties Printed by Benjamin Franklin.
39. Allan Heimert, Religion and the American Mind from the Great Awakening to the Revolution (Cambridge, 1968), 218-22.
40. Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia, Peden, ed., 62-63; Sheehan, Seeds of Extinction, 107-109.
41. Arthur O. Lovejoy, Reflections on Human Nature, (Baltimore, 1961), 222.
42. Pearce, Savages of America, 180-84.
43. Smith, Historical Account, 75-81.
44. Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York, 1964), ch. III.
45. Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, January 21, 1812, Lester J. Cappon, ed., The Adams-Jefferson Letters: The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams (Chapel Hill, 1959), II, 291.
46. Benjamin Franklin to Joshua Babcock, January 13, 1772; Smyth, ed., Writings of Benjamin Franklin, V, 362-63.

Further Reading:

- Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge, Mass., 1967).
- Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York, 1964).
- Roy Harvey Pearce, The Savages of America: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization, rev. ed. (Baltimore, Md., 1965).
- Charles L. Sanford, The Quest for Paradise: Europe and the American Moral Imagination (Urbana, Ill., 1961).
- Richard Slotkin, Regeneration through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600-1860 (Middletown, Conn., 1973)

712-04-02

Comment on Horsman and Sheehan

by

Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr.

These two papers pose a dilemma for me precisely because I agree with the main arguments of each author. Both papers exhibit as well as summarize the latest thinking and research upon White images of the Indian and official policy towards Native Americans during the Revolutionary era. Often the research synthesized in these papers is the author's own important contributions to the topic under discussion. When read in conjunction with each other, however, the two papers raise certain problems fundamental to the study in general of the imagery of Indians formed by Whites and the relation between imagery and policy previous to the American Revolution as well as during it. Although both authors see a gap between the images espoused by leading White intellectuals and political leaders in the new republic and the actual policy of the United States government towards Native American peoples, they point to quite different reasons for this divergence and exemplify contrasting approaches to the study of Indian imagery as formed by Whites and the significance of such imagery in shaping policy as executed at the time.

Professor Horsman examines the contradiction between the optimistic view of the Indian expounded by intellectuals and political leaders in the new republic and the popular view of the Indian as ignoble "savage" held by frontiersmen intruding upon native lands. In applying the insights of his important book on Expansion and American Indian Policy, 1783-1812, Horsman stresses the significance of territorial expansion for the formulation of the Indian policy in the United States during this period. For him, the rapid extension of the new nation through frontier takeover of native lands made the voices and actions of frontier leaders and their constituents more important than any noble savage images entertained by Jefferson and other Eastern intellectuals and politicians. By emphasizing the rapid expansion of the new American empire through frontier behavior, he places the Indian at the heart of White imperialism at the time and thereby challenges the significance, even the relevance, of studying White intellectuals' images of the Indian in the period. In developing his argument, Horsman raises the whole question of the relationship of imagery to policy and, more particularly, the subsidiary question of whose images are to be taken most seriously. Moreover, he suggests that vested interests prevail over professed high ideals in governing actual policy choices.

Although Professor Sheehan exemplifies the intellectual historian's approach to White imagery and policy at the time, he too recognizes the gap between idea and action in official policy but sees this as resulting from a fundamental ambivalence in republican thinking about the Indian. His argument in this paper expands upon his analysis of these topics presented in Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian by applying the historians' conception of the republican ideology of the American Revolution on its intellectual side to the role of the Indian in



American thought of the time. In examining White Americans' quest for cultural identity in the new republic, Sheehan finds basic antinomies embodied in intellectuals' and leaders' attitudes towards those peoples they called Indians. On one hand they feared the "Indianization" of their fellow Americans at the same time as they preferred, according to republican ideology, the simplicity of Indian manners and lifestyle to the corruption of decadent European civilization. On the other hand, these same intellectuals and politicians saw actual Native Americans as a barrier to the expansion of their beloved republican institutions beyond the Appalachians at the same time as they were required to formulate an Indian policy consistent with their own professed high ideals and hopes for an extended American empire. If the Indian as such played a minor role in the new order of the ages to be established under the aegis of the United States, Native American policy must accord nevertheless with the ideals as well as the interests of the new republic. By making the idea of the Indian central to American thought in the period, Sheehan promotes queries about the content of Indian imagery and the general intellectual context of the period. Since Sheehan assumes that republican ideals shaped official Indian policy, although ambiguously, his paper contrasts with the thrust of Horsman's argument about the connection between ideas and action.

Both papers suggest therefore the problems of the uses of Indian imagery by White people, whether intellectuals or frontiersmen, the relationship between imagery and policy as actually executed, and the connection between the intellectual and social context in shaping the content of imagery and policy. Without pretending to examine these larger issues completely, I shall direct my comments to some suggestions about these topics rather than any minute appraisal of the authors' arguments, in the hopes of showing why the two papers seem compatible to me in spite of some appearances to the contrary.

If one surveys the history of Whites' Indian imagery over five centuries, one soon discovers that the content of such images of the Indian in general is not very diverse from White knowledge of specific tribes and individuals. Essentially, the images reduce to two basic conceptions. One image portrays the Indian as a noble savage who possesses simple virtues and lives according to the humble dictates of nature. The other image characterizes the Indian as an ignoble savage of barbarous habits and brutal demeanor. Both images rest upon intellectual conventions long traditional in Western civilization and can be found in Columbus's time as well as our own. The noble savage conception sprang from primitivistic ideals as ancient as the Greeks, became applied to Native Americans as early as Columbus, and reached its peak through the pens of those French philosophes who espoused the Indian as the bon sauvage. For nineteenth-century Americans, this tradition led to the romantic Indians of James Fenimore Cooper's novels and George Catlin's canvases. Whites primarily used this image to criticize their own societies. Such usage is probably best seen in eighteenth-century France, when certain philosophes transformed for political and ideological purposes the natives depicted in the Jesuit Relations into philosophical critics of the ancien regime. The ignoble image of the Indian can be traced from the cinematic and dime-novel Westerns through the captivity narratives of the colonial and later periods back to the cannibals so vividly described by Amerigo

Vespucci. This image is presumably favored by those Whites who support for one reason or another the status quo in their own societies. The two images became a part of English political philosophy in the debate over the true state of man in nature. Thomas Hobbes pointed to the American Indians as proof that human life in its natural condition was "solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short," while John Locke thought the life of man in the state of nature was sociable, for "in the beginning all the world was America."<sup>2</sup>

Both images, it seems to me, rested upon the same basic conception of Native American life as deficient in contrast to White ways. Essentially, whether evaluated as good or bad, the life of the Indian was conceived as lacking the values, customs, institutions, economy, and culture of White civilization. For those Whites who condemned aspects of their own society then, such deficiency appeared praiseworthy; for those Whites contented with things as they were in their society then, Indian life appeared unfavorable in contrast to their own. In either case, the essence of Indianness was the deficiency of civilized White habits and thoughts. Certainly this deficiency image became the basic French conception of the Indian if we take the great Encyclopedie of the eighteenth century as our authority. That work defined sauvages as "people without law, without government, without religion, and who have no fixed habitation."<sup>3</sup> This basic assumption of deficiency also lay at bottom of English and American usage of the word Indian during this period. If the basic premise behind the good and bad images is the same, then the evaluation of the Indian either favorably or unfavorably must serve some larger purposes of the Whites, be they intellectuals or otherwise, depending upon the situation. In other words, the content of the imagery depends more upon what has to be argued than on what the Whites actually know about Native American tribes and individuals, and basically consists of evaluative judgments selected for the occasion.<sup>4</sup>

If my observations upon the history of Whites' Indian imagery are correct, then the problem in discussing the content of the images of the Indian during the era of the American Revolution is not the specific moral judgment or even the specific image so much as the larger intellectual, social, and political currents that gave them meaning at any given time. Sheehan finds this context in the republican ideology of the era while Horsman locates the context in the cleavage between the needs of the frontier and the East. Without denying that these two contexts are indeed important, let us survey briefly some of the uses of the Indian image as given in the two papers. There the reader finds different uses by the same person or similar uses by quite opposing interests.

Thomas Jefferson particularly varied his image of the Indian according to his rhetorical needs. Sheehan indicates how he used the bad image in listing the injuries and usurpations of George III against the supposedly innocent Americans that caused them to rebel. In the Declaration of Independence, he accused the English monarch of loosing the "merciless Indian savages" against the colonists, thereby exploiting the widely-held view of native warfare as that of ignoble savages. After the Revolution, however, he depicted the Native American in quite another guise as he defended the future of the United States and its peoples against the degenerationist arguments of

French conservative intellectuals. Thus his Notes on Virginia must be acknowledged as a pamphlet in an on-going polemical controversy in Europe. For that reason Jefferson's only published book must be seen as an ideological as well as a scientific description of his native state. In order to controvert the inferiority of native fauna in the New World, the sage of Monticello wrote approvingly of the intelligence and potential of the Indian. As part of this whole polemic, he could therefore boldly assert: "I believe the Indian then in body and mind equal to the White man," although his actions as Unites States President might suggest otherwise at times.<sup>5</sup>

Benjamin Franklin was supposedly more practical and less ideological than his countryman from Virginia, but he too uses Indian imagery as his argument demands. The now famous quotation from the Philadelphia printer so often used to prove the inspiration of the Iroquois League for the formation of the United States appears in the context of the history of Indian imagery to be just a sarcastic argument for the union of the colonies based upon the usual invidious contrast between White and Red Peoples:

It would be a very strange thing if Six nations of ignorant savages should be capable of forming a scheme for such a union, and be able to execute it in such a manner, as that it subsisted for ages, and appears indissolubly; and yet that a like union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen English colonies, to whom it is more necessary and must be advantageous, and who cannot be supposed to want<sup>6</sup> an equal understanding of their interests.

On the other hand, as Sheehan points out, he used an even more vicious stereotype of the Indian as savage scalper in his "Supplement to the Boston Independent Chronicle" to rally support behind the Whig side in the Revolution.

Even frontier leaders appeared not above using the image for political purposes other than the ostensible one of defense against the Indians. Aside from the long-traditional use of the ignoble savage as a device to obtain money and men from Eastern legislators for the defense of White inhabitants intruding upon native lands, the Indian problem proved advantageous, according to Horsman, in justifying the founding of a new state or the laying off of a new country. Such scattered evidence suggests that Indian imagery served some of the same functions on the frontier as it did for politicians to the east, although perhaps for opposite purposes. Thus one might conclude that popular images of the Indian should be treated in the same cautious manner as those of intellectuals.

Brief as this catalogue of usages of Indian imagery may be, I think it shows why both Horsman and Sheehan are correct in their approaches to that imagery at the time of the Revolution. The content of such imagery depended more upon the evaluation than upon the description of the Indian and therefore was able to serve a multitude of purposes. Republican assumptions about the effect of the environment upon human institutions, about the nature of the preferred political system in the new United States, and about the life cycle of civilizations all provide the intellectual context for understanding the future of the American empire, the frontier as ideological

geography, and therefore the understanding of Indian imagery and policy pronouncements of the period, as Sheehan demonstrates in his paper and book. Whether the imagery corresponded to fact is a different issue. Horsman's paper and book provide another context for the statements of the era. The conflicts between frontier and eastern leaders over the speed of expansion of the new American empire and the control of the evolving political system also shaped the content of Indian imagery as well as the nature of the policy adopted towards native Americans. The problem from this perspective is not whether the arguments of the two papers have validity but rather whether they comprehend all the possibilities of the major contexts for the imagery of the period. Could other researchers find other polemical and political controversies that employ Indian imagery as often as the two presented in these papers? And would other intellectual, political, and social currents of the time explain them better than those so skillfully sketched by Horsman and Sheehan?

To point out the diverse contexts in which Whites used Indian imagery in the Revolutionary period does not, of course, resolve the serious problem of the relationship between those ideas and the policies and behavior manifested towards Native Americans. Without denying the gap between official rhetoric and actual policy or between frontier and eastern political leaders on the nature of the Indian's future advanced in the two papers, I wonder whether the contrast in fundamental attitudes is as great as the two authors imply. If the deficiency image underlies all White evaluations of the Indian, then the difference in various basic outlooks and policy-formulation may not be as great as the authors suggest. Westerner and Easterner, intellectual and politician alike looked to an expanding American empire settled primarily or entirely by White Americans. What separated the idealists from the materialists of the time, the optimists from the pessimists about the future of the American Indians, was not the basic desirability of White settlement of the West but only how fast it should proceed and whether the Indians should retain any land at all even if they converted to White ways of life. Regardless of White opinions upon the potential of the Indian, all sides agreed upon the future of Indian lands: the first Americans must be replaced by "proper" Americans farming the soil of the new American empire. The only question that really divided Easterners from Westerners was the exact method of accomplishing the transfer of occupancy which was believed to be inevitable.

For those policy-makers like Secretary of War Henry Knox, seeking a mode of expansion compatible with the supposedly high ideals represented by the new United States, the professed goal became the assimilation of the Indian to approved White ways before the Native Americans should be overwhelmed by frontier White settlement. Thus even under the most favorable White estimate of Indian potential, the sense of deficiency demanded that the first Americans be re-formed according to the ideas of what was a proper American lifestyle at the time, or be eliminated from their lands in favor of those people who lived according to the approved model. For Indians to retain their native land they would have to be redeemed from their deficient state of savagery (whether deemed noble or ignoble) to the "fullness" of civilization; otherwise they would have to surrender their territory to those who exemplified the republican lifestyle thought desirable in

the new United States. Under their impression of native and White destinies, the policy-makers and intellectuals espousing the so-called optimistic view of the Indian envisaged a West settled primarily by White rather than Native Americans; they believed this could be done with minimum friction because the adoption of civilization by the Indians would drastically reduce the lands needed for their subsistence and thus open frontier areas to White settlement. In this manner, Knox and others hoped to save the Indians at the expense of their culture while providing farms for the land-hungry frontiersmen. The chief problem from the viewpoint of this policy of expansion with honor was to convince the Indians to accept civilization or removal before the rapidity of Western White expansion produced the inevitable wars with the natives as the frontierspeople invaded their territories.

In the event of Indian conflict, Eastern ideals capitulated to Western action, as Horsman points out, for all agreed that Indian lands, if not Indian bodies also, must be put to higher uses according to both the ideals and interests of the time. For Easterners, like Westerners therefore, wars, unfortunate as they might be in certain leaders' eyes, were as necessary as they were probably inevitable to chastise and correct Indian ideas of the uses of their own lands. Only such a view of Eastern ideals can account for the lack of enthusiasm and money devoted to the task of converting the Indian to his civilized destiny. What separated the idealists from the pessimists, and the Eastern policy-makers from the Western frontier leaders, was not the destiny of the Indian and his lands, but whether any Indians at all could be converted to White ways and, if they did, should those few be allowed to retain their lands? In judging these contrasting views as ideals from our point of view they are quite different, but when examined in light of actual policy implications and practice at the time they appear similar in effects. Perhaps proto-racist assumptions underlay the environmental outlook of intellectuals on the Indian just as they did the popular view of the frontier leaders.

From another point of view, the conflict between frontier and Eastern leaders had important ideological and social class dimensions beyond the problems of Indian policy. Thus the difference over Indian policy encompasses matters beyond a mere disagreement between frontier populations involved in trespass and exposed to Indian wars, and intellectuals and leaders safely living in areas already cleared of their native inhabitants. Republican leaders had an image of the frontier settler often more disparaging than that of the Indian. Crevecoeur, in his Letters from An American Farmer, portrayed the frontier Whites as even more savage and debased than the Indians nearby. Jefferson himself viewed the frontier population as halfway between "tractable people" and savages.<sup>8</sup> Although this must be understood in terms of his environmental interpretation of the frontier, such a view possessed social class and policy implications for who should exploit the West and how soon. He favored those agrarians he thought the chosen people of God on the frontier as elsewhere in the United States. Like other republican leaders, he believed that the future of the United States was best insured by a population of farmers slowly moving westward according to the laws of the time. When the wild Whites on the frontier violated republican

laws as well as Indian treaties, they endangered the public welfare as conceived by the republican leaders of the period. Thus these leaders frequently pictured those lawless Whites as "our own white Indians of no character who have Private Views without Regard to public benefits to serve," as a congressional land surveyor at the mouth of the Maumee observed in late 1786.<sup>9</sup> What he was expressing so succinctly was the gulf he saw between the public good espoused by the leaders of the new nation and the disregard of that elite view by the hoi polloi who crossed the Ohio River on to Indian territory in disregard of the law. From our standpoint such an image of the savage frontiersmen rationalized the conflict between a republican elite and the lesser sort who flaunted the rules of the former in pursuit of the lands that would give them the wealth and status to challenge the Easterners on their own terms.

Such a conflict of ideas and class had implications for the federal system of government espoused by the new nation under the Northwest Ordinance and the Federal Constitution of 1787. The post-Revolution differences between East and West constitute but an extension of the problem of centralization that brought on the Revolution itself. Congress, first under the Articles of Confederation and then under the Federal Constitution, faced the same problems as the English Government in dealing with land disposal, colonial government, Indian policy, and military protection in the West. Policy makers in the new nation saw these policies as intimately connected and therefore demanding simultaneous solutions. Land disposal and colonial government in the trans-Appalachian West were taken care of in the Ordinances of 1785 and 1787 by policies considered new and republican at the time.<sup>10</sup> Military protection for frontier White and Indian alike proved a bone of contention in Congress partly because of republican fear of a standing army, but the necessity of dealing with White intrusion upon Indian lands and native reprisal.<sup>11</sup> settled the question in favor of a small force augmented by militia. Congress adopted old policies towards Native Americans as part of the expansion with honor approach to Indian affairs. In trade and intercourse acts regulating commerce and alcohol, the assertion of preemption of Indian lands through purchase by the central government, and the claim of de jure sovereignty over Indian territory without de facto control all implied the continuation of old English policies as the official way of handling Indian affairs in the new nation.<sup>12</sup> The territorial and land disposal systems encouraged the extension of white settlement beyond the Appalachians while the army and Indian policy made this movement possible. All policies were to regulate that speed in favor of the presumed overall benefit of the nation, but opinion differed upon that important matter in the East as well as the West, as can be seen in the long Congressional debates over the navigation of the Mississippi River and a commercial treaty with England. Thus the speed of Western development became involved with the whole question of central control of the nation's affairs.

To the extent that the debate over federal versus state and local control (exemplified best in the struggle over ratification of the Federal Constitution) involved questions of class interest and elite control over national affairs, then the conflict between frontier and Eastern leaders, like the differences among the latter themselves, over Indian policy and speed of White expansion must be placed in this

larger political and social context. In the end, some of these questions would be settled by the incorporation of the frontier population into the federal government through the territorial system. As the frontier moved westward during the nineteenth century, the old West became increasingly the "East." In that sense the territorial and land disposal systems affected the formulation as well as the execution of Indian policy; but such was always the combined aim of the various policies that provided for the expansion for the American empire according to the destiny political leaders everywhere felt was manifest. Indians had to give way before civilization, particularly the American way of progress. In this view, the larger trends of American society determined the perceptions of the Indians, what was wanted of or from the Indians, and how the results were to be judged or measured. In this best of all policy worlds (from the viewpoint of Whites), the idea of the Indian explained to themselves both what had to be done and what could be done for the sake of both Native and White Americans. Interests and ideals became fused through the deficiency image of the Indian in a dialectical process of policy formulation and execution, and both were part of the larger social and political outlooks of the era.

## Notes

1. On the noble savage in general, see Hoxie N. Fairchild, The Noble Savage: A Study in Romantic Naturalism (New York, 1928); Henri Baudet, Paradise on Earth: Some Thoughts on European Images of Non-European Man, trans. Elizabeth Wenholt (New Haven and London, (orig. ed., 1651, 1965).
2. Hobbes' oft-quoted phrase is from his Leviathan, ed. Crawford B. MacPherson (Baltimore, 1968), 186. Locke's words are found in his Two Treatises on Government, ed. John Laslett (Cambridge, England, 1960), 319. For some of the authors classifying Indian imagery as good and bad, favorable and unfavorable, see among many: Gilbert Chinard, L'exotisme Américain dans la littérature Française au XVI<sup>e</sup> siècle (Paris, 1911); Robert R. Cawley, The Voyagers and Elizabethan Drama (Boston, 1938); Gustav H. Blanke, Amerika im englische Schrifttum des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts (Bochum-Langendreer, 1962), 186-282; Howard M. Jones, O Strange New World: American Culture, the Formative Years (New York, 1964), 1-70; Gary Nash, "The Image of the Indian in the Southern Colonial Mind," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d. ser., 29 (April 1972), 197-230; John H. Kennedy, Jesuit and Savage in New France (New Haven, 1950); Lewis O. Saum, The Fur Trade and the Indian (Seattle, 1965); Jack D. Forbes, ed., The Indian in America's Past (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964), 15-34.
3. Translated from the Encyclopédie, ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une société de gens de lettres, vol. 14 (Neufchastel, 1765), 729.
4. These two paragraphs as well as most of this paper summarize my conclusions upon the history of Indian imagery to be presented in my book "The Idea of the Indian and Native American History" to be published by Alfred A. Knopf, Inc.
5. Quoted in Antonello Gerbi, The Dispute of the New World: The History of a Polemic, 1750-1900, trans. Jeremy Moyle (Pittsburgh, 1973), 261. This volume is an excellent guide to the whole degenerationist controversy.
6. This statement appeared originally in a letter of March 20, 1751, Leonard Labaree, ed., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin, vol. 4 (New Haven, 1961), 119.
7. Michel-Guillaume J. de Crèvecoeur, Letters from an American Farmer (orig. ed. 1782, New York, 1957), 49.
8. Jefferson frequently thought of frontiersmen in these terms during the era of the Revolution. See, for example, his comments to James Madison, July 19 and December 16, 1786, in Julian Boyd, ed., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton, 1950), vol. 10, 112-13, 603.
9. Samuel H. Parsons to William S. Johnson, November 26, 1785, in the William S. Johnson Papers, The Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.
10. I have applied republican ideology to the novelty of the territorial system and the nature of the frontier and its inhabitants in my article, "The Northwest Ordinance and the Principle of territorial Evolution," in John P. Bloom, ed., The American Territorial System (Athens, Ohio, 1973), 45-55.



11. The significance of Indian warfare in maintaining an army in the new nation may be seen in Francis P. Prucha, The Sword of the Republic: The United States Army on the Frontier, 1783-1846 (New York, 1969).
12. The continuity between English and United States Indian policy may be traced readily in Francis P. Prucha, American Indian Policy in the Formative Years: The Trade and Intercourse Acts, 1790-1834 (Cambridge, Mass., 1962).

712-04-03

## Savages Are Heroes, Too, Whiteman!

by

Mary E. Fleming Mathur

Ten years ago the United States seemed quite shockingly idolatrous about its founding fathers and its flag. Although Rupert Hughes had raised an apparent tempest in a teapot in the 1920s with his three-volume "debunking" work on George Washington, the majority of his reviewers adopted a "damn with faint praise" approach as Hughes's volumes appeared. Later, though Kenneth Roberts's Rabble in Arms became a popular novel in Canada, quoting him in American college classrooms was calculated to shatter the students' minds.

Today is a different period, with clay-footed idols collapsing by the score all around us. From Watergate to accusations that George Washington so padded his expense accounts that he cost the new American government a fortune is only a short step in dishonesty. John Hancock and Samuel Adams were making so much money smuggling that they could not fail to resent the British attempts to enforce laws against that illegal but lucrative occupation. Now Benjamin Franklin has been accused of being a British spy. It seems time to look beyond these traditional heroes to a different kind who has been less publicized, a Native American hero.

Tiyanoga, known to the English as Chief Hendrick, first became famous to European historians as the "Emperor of the Six Nations" when he was painted by John Verlst during his visit with three other sachems from the Mohawk Valley to the Court of Queen Anne of England in 1710. His real status at that time has been called in question. According to a 1727 French document he was an ordinary Indian of no particular rank who was virtually disowned by the Five Nations because they had not authorized the trip to England. Although the French document may be doubted because of the advantage to the French in derogating the "kings" at the English court, New York's Cadwallader Colden also referred contemptuously to Peter Schuyler's "carrying to England five or six common Indians," and New York's Governor Robert Hunter wrote to the home government in 1713 that, "Happily indeed for us, those [Indians] who were carried to England were men of no consideration or rather the most obscure amongst them," though conceding Hendrick "some credit with the small village of Mohawks called Schoharee."<sup>2</sup>

Whatever their origins, these "kings" were scarcely ordinary men. Few eighteenth-century Europeans would have been able to preserve composure in the circus atmosphere in which they were exhibited. They had been taken to London by Peter Schuyler, one of Albany's leading citizens, in order to impress the court, and they took London by storm. In the London of 1710, contrasting with its grotesque spectacles of bull-baiting and dog fights during the intermissions at the theatre, the dignified bearing of the four Mohawks was received with great enthusiasm. Haughty aristocrats and citizens of humbler rank agreed that the sachems were "Men of good Presence, and those who

have convers'd with them say, that they have an exquisite sense and a quick Apprehension."<sup>3</sup> No one in London was derogatory or contemptuous.

Of the four sachems who enjoyed this broadening experience of an ocean trip and a grand reception in London, then a city many times larger than any in America, Tiyanoga was to have the longest and most glorious career. What was the real identity of this man who thrilled the multitude of London and received his court dress from the hands of a reigning Queen? Tiyanoga, who was to become the great chief of the Mohawks, may not even have been a Mohawk by birth. He may have been a Mohegan, an Oneida, or even a Seneca. At most, his mother was a Mohawk and his father a Mohegan which, though making him a real Kaniekahaka, left him at least half foreign to the tribe in which he rose to leadership.

According to Governor Bellomont in the late seventeenth century, Hendrick was a convert to Christianity and a preacher in the Mohawk language. There is a record of his having attended a conference in Albany as early as 1700.<sup>4</sup> But he was disliked by the late Governor, Robert Hunter, who called him "a very turbulent subtle fellow who since his return [from England] has given us more trouble than all other Indians besides." Hunter continued, "had he the hundredth part of that power which was ascribed to him we must have been in actual war with them at this time." On another occasion Hunter referred cuttingly to Hendrick as having tried to persuade the Mohawks that the English<sup>5</sup> minister "was to claim one-tenth of all their lands and goods."

Although he was not mentioned much in the government documents during Governor Hunter's time, Hendrick was a man "of spirit and striking force" who left a strong impression on persons who met him. The Pilgrim botanist Thomas More mentioned renewing acquaintance with Hendrick at a conference in Boston in 1722 where Hendrick remembered their previous meeting in England.<sup>6</sup> After a conference in 1744, Andrew Hamilton called Hendrick "a bold intrepid fellow."<sup>7</sup> The ill will shown by Governor Hunter was not typical of reactions by other colonials. It arose because Hunter and Hendrick had some serious conflicts.

The source of the quarrel is not far to seek, but it must be distinguished carefully from the mythology that has grown up around it. In the myth, Hendrick is purported to have generously invited a community of Palatine refugees of the Thirty Years War to leave their temporary refuge in England and come to America, and in the myth they arrived in New York where they soon became embroiled in disputes with Robert Hunter. The story is devoutly believed by the descendants of these Palatines and by the Iroquois.<sup>8</sup> But Governor Hunter himself had written a letter, on November 30, 1709, suggesting that 3,000 Palatines might be sent to New York, and Hendrick and his companion sachems had not embarked for London until December 16, 1709. Moreover the Admiralty papers show that the Palatines had actually sailed for New York before the Indian sachems could possibly have talked to them in England.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, there was a basis of fact behind the old myth, which caused the Palatines ultimately to give their gratitude to Hendrick instead of Hunter. The reason is to be found not in who invited them, but rather in how they were treated after they

immigrated. They had come on the understanding that they could support themselves by making tar from pine trees for naval stores. The process required a minimum of three years for its establishment, and thus demanded a long program of support from the government. But a series of communications between Hunter and the Palatines shows that this necessary support was not maintained for even the minimum time required.<sup>10</sup> Against Hunter's wishes, many of the Palatines left the pine forests where they could not farm for subsistence, and settled in Schoharie and lands nearby. The removal created potential conflict with the Indians whose lands these were, and Hendrick was one of the friendly sachems who persuaded the other Indians to agree to the Palatine settlement. When the Palatines moved into the Schoharie they met there some Mohawks who welcomed them in Hendrick's name.<sup>11</sup>

If both Palatines and Mohawks cling to Hendrick as their hero, their reasons are not necessarily bad. With the passage of time the details of fact were overshadowed in memory by that glamorous trip to England of Hendrick and his companions, and the trip gained mythical credit at the expense of the more prosaic facts. There is no doubt, however, that the outcome of the circumstances, in either version, was antagonism between Governor Hunter on the one hand, and Hendrick and the Palatines on the other.

If Hendrick deserved the Palatines' gratitude, he surely deserves also to be remembered gratefully by the people of the United States. In two respects especially, he made a profound effect upon our history. As leader of the Iroquois he typified the role they perceived for themselves as the "sheltering Tree" protecting the British colonies in America: undoubtedly, Hendrick saved the New York frontier through his loyalty to the British during the Seven Years War, and indirectly the frontiers of New England and the Southern colonies as well. Besides this, he influenced the men who wrote the Articles of Union of 1754. For these accomplishments Hendrick-Tiyanoga might with reason be called the real Father of the United States.

Hendrick was able to achieve so much through the exercise of a good deal of political wizardry. Although he may have seemed (to non-Indians) to have powers of command, Lafitau has made it obvious that Hendrick won consensus through his negotiating skills and oratorical abilities. This feat is the more impressive in the context of the Iroquois political system. The Iroquois had a matriarchal society in which an oyander, or clan mother, was the person with power of command over the sons of the male members of her clan. Thus Hendrick derived no political advantage from being a man. Like other male leaders, he was obliged to depend upon his powers of persuasion.<sup>12</sup> These he had in abundance.

In ordinary times the ability to sway the Mohawks would have been enough in itself to make Hendrick a very important person in the eyes of the French and British imperial contestants for dominion in North America, but by the 1740s the Mohawk name had become a hollow power except at the Council of the Iroquois League because of manpower losses from the wars waged incessantly by the Iroquois on their own account as well as in behalf of the British. The Mohawk name might still be used to frighten little children among the Montagnais and Naskapi, but the bogeyman was a paper tiger to statesmen aware of the realities. Settlers were pressing hard upon the Iroquois castles, and

the land thieves among them included members of New York's official Commissioners of Indian Affairs. Just as the Mohawks suspected, the honorable gentlemen from Albany, who had been assigned to protect them as mediators between the native and colonial governments, were a pack of thieves. History is so boringly repetitive in that particular theme. The Mohawks, being closest to the settlers in location, were most weakened by English intrusions into their lands. Before they could resume their former role of protecting the British from French troops and French-allied Indians, someone would have to protect the Mohawks from the British. Hendrick understood this necessity, and when he found the needed champion in William Johnson, he formed a partnership with Johnson that revived Mohawk power.

Hendrick entered cautiously into that alliance. He pretended to be unable to speak English while he conducted secret surveillance of Johnson's activities and character. One writer has claimed that Johnson fitted well into the social structures of the Iroquois because his native Ireland retained clan concepts; this may be doubted because the Iroquois clan is matrilineal and the Irish clan was patrilineal.<sup>13</sup> However, the general principles of attitude toward the role and duties of the clan chieftain among the Scots and Irish did not differ much from that held by the Iroquois Americans. Johnson showed the qualities required of a Pinetree Chief: generosity and a "father of the people" attitude, and he acquired a reputation for honesty that impressed Hendrick.

Johnson adopted the Iroquois, as they would adopt him. He learned the Mohawk language and customs, took Mohawk brides, fathered (according to scandalous rumor) about three hundred Mohawks personally, and fought side by side with the tribe's warriors in council and in battle. He set himself up as protector and champion of these rural people. He not only believed that what was good for him was good for them, but he also dealt with the Mohawks as with members of his household, by intelligent expediency--cajoling, persuading and leading them to his own advantage in conflict with the French. Through the support of Hendrick, Johnson gained such great influence among the Mohawks of Canajoharie that he was able at least to keep the Iroquois neutral when he could not persuade them to join him against the French.

It was Hendrick's Mohawks who saved the New York frontier and helped New England and Pennsylvania defend themselves while the colonists--especially the fat burghers of Albany--were spending too much of their own time bickering over short-term financial gains for themselves. Hendrick himself was one of the first casualties of his own policies, killed in 1755 at the battle of Fort William Henry. Happily, he died without realizing the ultimate cost to his own people of their alliance with William Johnson. Their very success was their undoing. The final defeat of the French meant that the British colonists no longer needed the Iroquois as a buffer. With the French threat gone, the Iroquois became only a barrier between the English colonists and the rich lands of the Mohawk Valley, the Finger Lakes region, and the Ohio Valley. Johnson, too, had failed to foresee all the outcomes of his policies. By leaving the Iroquois defenseless except for himself, he was preparing the way for revolt by the colonists against the crown he served. After the Pontiac revolt was crushed in 1763, the colonists felt no further need for the British,

and when the royal government committed the faux pas of expecting the colonists to pay for their own defense, the end was in sight.

When the Revolution came, the loyalty of the Iroquois to the British was not universal, but that made no difference. To the frontiersmen the only good Indian was a dead one, even if he had fought for General Washington. As it happened, the Indians had considerable sympathy for the colonists' fight for the democratic principles that the Iroquois had taught them, and if Washington had not been a racial bigot all the Iroquois might have joined him. However, fighting for the British had its advantages; the Mohawks who supported the Crown acquired new lands after the war, while the Oneida who allied with the American lost everything.

In any case, it is not fair to take advantage of hindsight to condemn Hendrick outright for bad judgment. He chose Johnson as the Mohawk champion because he saw in Johnson ideals of behavior admired in Mohawk tradition. Though Hendrick erred in not realizing that Johnson's first loyalties were to England, he died before the inevitable result of the French defeat became clear. Hendrick had seen only what could be seen in his own lifetime; namely, the great need for the Iroquois to defeat the French in order to heal the split between the pro-British and pro-French "praying Indians."

In still another respect Hendrick deserves to be remembered in history; that is, for his influence upon the statesmen who attended the Albany Conference of 1754 and wrote the famous Articles of Union as the proposals of that conference. The major author of the Articles is considered to be Benjamin Franklin who had already by that time become sensitive to Indian political ideas though he expressed himself with contemporary bias. In a letter to James Parker, dated March 20, 1750, Franklin wrote that if Six Nations of "ignorant savages" could forge a union that had lasted for centuries and appeared solid, why could not a dozen English colonies see the need for union and do the same?<sup>14</sup> Both in Franklin's letters and in the papers collected in O'Callaghan's Documentary History of New York, it is obvious that the two most prominent Mohawks present at the Albany Conference were Hendrick and his brother Abraham.<sup>15</sup> Their reasons for being there have been interpreted in different ways. Hendrick definitely received a special invitation from Governor James Delaney because of his influence among the Iroquois.<sup>16</sup> Various unofficial sources have claimed that Hendrick and Abraham also received special invitations through Sir William Johnson to provide evidence concerning the structure of the Iroquois Confederation.

The speeches made by Chief Hendrick far outshone those of his fellow delegates even though those included such notables as Benjamin Franklin, John Penn, James De Lancey, and Sir William Johnson. With Franklin's mind already turned toward an interest in the Iroquois Confederacy, it is extremely likely that he sought opportunity to consult with such an impressive representative of the League. Though it may be an exaggeration to say that Hendrick was the source for the Articles of Union, an examination of the Articles shows definite influence of an Iroquois rather than a British model. The evidence of such a contention must indeed be indirect or circumstantial because the colonists were not about to put in writing any expressions of gratitude to "savages."

The two models easily available to the colonists for their Articles of Union were the British system and the Iroquois. Since the colonies were more like independent nations than parts of a whole, they more closely resembled the Iroquois tribes in their basic problems, and the Articles followed the Iroquois model of a unicameral general council rather than the British bicameral parliamentary model. Like the Iroquois model again, the Articles recommended an unbalanced representation but left each colony capable of vetoing decisions.

But the Iroquois structure depended on other political ideas besides union though that one in itself caused difficulties because the colonial delegates to the Albany Conference had not been given sufficient authority by their governments to confirm the Conference's proposals for union. Only a few far-seeing colonials and the British Crown were interested in the union concept, and they were not all ready to accept the other Iroquois ideas that could make it work. Apparently the Crown liked the idea of union but not the other basic Iroquois idea of democracy. The famous jurist Felix Cohen is supposed to have read reports of British spies of pre-revolutionary days claiming that the democratic ideas of the Indians were undermining the traditional form of British government in the colonies.<sup>17</sup>

The colonists themselves restricted their franchise to males, and this restriction may explain why they had to adjust to majority rule instead of adopting consensualism as in the Iroquois Confederacy. It was true also that the American colonies were virtually a kindred-less society without a sign of the kindred base upholding the Iroquois Confederacy, and that the colonies could not have incorporated kinship into their system even if Franklin and the other statesmen had understood this aspect of Iroquois politics. Only the superficial form of the Iroquois League was adopted into the Albany Articles of Union, and this fact may go far to explain their failure.

However, it appears likely that the example of the Iroquois Confederacy influenced not only the Articles of Union, but also indirectly the present form of government of the United States, as Franklin's comments suggest. Franklin's extensive correspondence with such adopted Iroquois as Cadwallader Colden and Sir William Johnson adds to the evidence of a debt to the Iroquois. Franklin even obtained a record from Johnson of the "proceedings" of<sup>18</sup> an Indian conference in which the form of deliberation is described.

A great debt is owed by the United States to the Iroquois in most constant contact with the colonists, and a special debt is owed to Hendrick for keeping them faithful to the British during the long wars with the French. Hendrick is the running thread through all these matters. Since he was a man whose life was as long as his abilities were marked, his influence was felt long enough to take effect. By preserving New York from French conquest he can rightfully be called the father of New York State. As a true provider of the conceptual model for the American federal union he preceded George Washington in his claim to honored status among the founding fathers of the United States.

The non-tribal scholar's prime concern may be what the Revolution did to the Native American, but to tribalists Hendrick, the hero, is a memory of what tribal people did for the Revolution. To the tribalist Hendrick, Tiyanoga of the Kaniekaha, remains a symbol of a proud past when tribal people were not only important and powerful but also

honorable, and he revives hope for the future. Such heroes are necessary to a people's self-respect, and they are missing from the histories of Native Americans. Like the lost, strayed, and stolen history of Black Americans, the history of Native Americans is filled with slurring stereotypes--rapacious savages massacring women and children, killing from ambush, "selfishly" holding on to land they supposedly were incapable of using. The Native Americans of today demand a different history. Give us back our heroes, they cry with one voice. Savages are heroes, too, Whiteman!

#### Response to critique

I agree with Dr. Graymont that no documentary reference can be found to support the oral tradition concerning Felix Cohen. That is why I wrote that he is "supposed" to have read British reports of the influence of Indian democratic ideas on the colonists.

I cannot agree with her comment on the treaty minutes. Contrary to her contention, the first day or two of conferences with members of the Iroquois League were always spent in reciting the account of the formation of the League, just as is done today. Even if Franklin did not record the fact, these accounts were available to him.

712-142-01



## Notes

1. E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York, 15 vols. (Albany, 1856-1887), IX, 983.
2. Cadwallader Colden, "Letters on Smith's History of New York," New-York Historical Society Collections, Publication Fund Series (1968), 200; Calendar of State Papers, Colonial, America and West Indies, 1712-1714 (London, Public Record Office), 158-159.
3. Richmond P. Bond, Queen Anne's American Kings (Oxford, 1952), 16.
4. Arthur Pound, Johnson of the Mohawks (New York, 1930), 512.
5. Cal. St. Pprs., Am. and W. Indies, 1712-1714, 159; O'Callaghan, ed., N.Y. Col. Docs., VI, 358.
6. Bond, Queen Anne's American Kings, 118, 64-65.
7. Carl Bridenbaugh, ed., Gentleman's Progress (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1948), 112-113.
8. P.A.W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760, Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia, 1945), 13-14.
9. O'Callaghan, ed., N.Y. Col. Docs., V, 112-113; Walter A. Knittle, Early Eighteenth Century Palatine Emigration (Philadelphia, 1937), 150-153.
10. O'Callaghan, ed., N.Y. Col. Docs., V, 165-167, 172, 175-176, 189, 213-215, 235-239, 553-555, 570.
11. S.H. Cobb, The Story of the Palatines: An Episode in Colonial History (New York, 1897), 212.
12. The Iroquois clan system has several dyadic grouping relationships described by Lafitau and more recently by others like Hewitt. J.F. Lafitau, Les Moeurs des Sauvages Ameriquains Comparees aux Peuples de Premiere Temps, 2 vols. (Paris, 1724); J.N.B. Hewitt, "Status of Women in Iroquois Polity Before 1784," Smithsonian Institution Annual Report (Washington, D.C., ), 475-488.
13. James T. Flexner, Mohawk Baronet: Sir William Johnson of New York (New York, 1959), 39, 41.
14. Leonard W. Labaree, ed., Papers of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven, Conn., 1959-), IV, 118-119. Granted that Franklin was engaging in his usual rhetoric, the remark does indicate some awareness, however limited, of the structure of the Iroquois League, and that its continued successful existence interested him.
15. See Labaree, ed., Papers of Benjamin Franklin, VI, and E.B. O'Callaghan, ed., Documentary History of the State of New York, 4 vols. (Albany, 1849-1851), II, 316-360.
16. Ibid.; George L. Beer, British Colonial Policy, 1754-1765 (New York, 1907).
17. I have not found documentation for this claim, which rests on a statement passed on to me by Ray Fadden on several occasions. Ray Fadden, or Aren Akweks, a long-time teacher at St. Regis Mohawk School on the New York State side of the reservation, and an active proselytizer of the Long House religion, is a primary stimulus of the White Roots of Peace movement which publishes Akwasasne Notes, a third-world type newspaper extremely popular with reservation and urban Indians. He himself is the author of a large series of articles and pamphlets on the Iroquois, some of it on oral tradition.

The Imperial Revolution: The American Revolution as a  
Tripartite Struggle for Sovereignty

by

Francis Jennings

Histories of the American Revolution have assumed a number of propositions that led logically to the conclusion that this great event was a struggle for liberty, and the assumptions have remained unexamined until recent years. Or, it would be better to say that the liberty assumption has been accepted uncritically by Euramericans -- i.e., Americans of European ancestry -- for, as soon as that distinction is made, the possibility suggests itself that there may have been other kinds of Americans and other views about Revolutionary liberty. Afro-Americans understand very well that the planters of Virginia or the Carolinas had no intention to achieve liberty for their slaves. There are also Americans of yet another continental origin and biological stock -- the Native Americans or Amerindians -- for whom the Revolution has a significance other than liberty.

The conclusion that the American Revolutionaries fought for liberty is logically tenable only on the assumption that Americans from Europe are the only Americans -- that the societies and cultures of peoples of other origins are alien to the society and culture called American, and that the history of the United States of America has been made exclusively by these all-American Euramericans and is their property. The part is equated with the whole in a logical fallacy that was identified at least as long ago as the era of Aristotle. We have inherited the fallacy from the men who wrote our historical sources. The slaveholder Jefferson could be perfectly sincere when he wrote that all men had been created equal, because his conception of humanity was bounded racially. Though the error of that conception is now understood, our histories have not yet been fully corrected to eliminate it.

When different assumptions are made -- when all the ethnic components of American society are included in its definition -- the Revolution begins to appear as a struggle by Euramericans for their own liberty which they conceived in part as a privilege to nullify the liberties of Afro-Americans and Amerindians. As regards Blacks, the Revolutionaries of the northern states ended slavery either by immediate or gradual action, but the planters of the south resisted all efforts to free their chattels. As regards Indians, a dominant element among the Revolutionaries fought to dispossess the tribes of their territories and to extend an empire over them. For the Indians the Revolution was a counter-revolution.

This dictum assumes that the Indians of "British" North America were human beings capable of organizing their communities under governments that performed ordering functions comparable to those of governments in what are called civilized societies. The assumption implies further that these tribal governments were able to mark off particular territorial boundaries, to prevent and punish trespass, and to regulate conduct within their jurisdictions. These governments were not "savage," and their territories were not "virgin."<sup>2</sup> Though

Indian governments were tribal in form, and thus depended on voluntary obedience to a much greater degree than the coercive state-form governments of Europe, many of the tribes maintained formal independence during the entire period of British colonialism in America. To a degree this fact is obscured by the ambiguity of the word "dependent." Indian society as a whole had become technologically and economically dependent on European society as a whole through the institution of trade, but particular Indian tribes did not acknowledge themselves as political dependencies<sup>3</sup> of particular British colonies unless they had been conquered by arms.

The tribes, in fact, were engaged in a freedom struggle of their own between the Seven Years War and the Revolution, and they had gained concessions from the crown that established an equivocal political status. As the crown's officers viewed this status, it was that of semi-autonomous segments of the empire, presided over by viceregents called superintendents. As the Indians regarded it, however, the tribes were free "nations" who dealt with their great British ally through his ambassadors. A vast territory west of the Appalachians was "reserved for the tribes by royal proclamation in 1763, thus creating a political frontier that myth depicts as a line between "civilization" and "savagery."<sup>4</sup> The Indians interpreted this "reservation" as a recognition of their territorial rights, and they struggled by diplomacy and combat to preserve their independent jurisdictions.

The turbulence among the tribes caused the British ministry to formulate a policy of military occupation of the west by royal troops, a policy that was expensive to administer and stimulated ministerial efforts to require the colonies to pay at least a substantial part of its cost.<sup>5</sup> The Stamp Tax of 1764 was enacted to defray continuing costs of garrisoning the west, rather than to pay off debts earlier incurred by the crown in the Seven Years War. The western policy led to the Stamp Tax, the tax led to riots and defiance, and agitation became revolution. Whether the Revolution might have come anyway need not to be considered here. What does seem apparent in fact is that its proximate cause was a tax enacted to control Indians. The irritant was aggravated by the implications of the administration of the western program because royal assumption of responsibility for Indian policy required royal denial of provincial authority and royal restriction upon colonial practices in relations with the Indians.

Prior to the Seven Years War the colonies had claimed jurisdiction over Indian persons and lands by virtue of royal charters, though such claims were mentioned with discretion during negotiations with unconquered tribes. The colonial governments were in the position of feudal lords marcher who had been authorized to conquer and rule over vast fiefdoms, and whose charter grants had suddenly been revoked as triumph neared.<sup>6</sup> These collective lordships held other grievances also, and certainly their social forms and institutions had changed considerably from those of medieval times; but in the structure of an empire still tacked together by feudally derived law the American Revolution was a barons' revolt, and the Revolutionaries fought with equal determination to free themselves from royal rule and to continue that expansion of their own conquests which was their reason for being in America.

To argue thus is to deny the uniqueness of American history in general and the history of the Revolution in particular, except insofar as all historical phenomena have identifying uniqueness. Englishmen in America used methods of colonization and government that they had developed previously in conquering an empire elsewhere. Though the sequence is obscured by different names, the Angevin Empire had preceded the British empire in America, and the special relevance of that feudal sprawl lies in the claim of Henry II to be Lord of Ireland as well as King of England. During many centuries the Anglo-Norman lords, and then their English descendants, fought and schemed against the tribal natives of Ireland (whom the invaders called "wild" and "savage" as the invaders of America would also execrate natives). Some of the invaders of Ireland succeeded in dispossessing native Irishmen of territories in order to plant colonies of settlers who brought their own laws and customs and held land by their own system of tenure. There came a time when these ethnic offshoots of England tried to assert independence from the crown while they tried simultaneously to assert hegemony over the indigenous Irish. Unlike the later American Revolutionaries, these "Old English" colonists in Ireland failed, but the component processes of their effort bear many resemblances to what was to come in America.

The first complete, albeit temporary, conquest of Ireland was effected by Elizabethan adventurers with troops from England and Scotland, and some of those gentlemen adventurers were also projectors of colonization in America. Sir Walter Raleigh is the most conspicuous example. Irishmen refused to stay conquered, as we know, and the English lords were forced to cope with innumerable risings and insurrections. The similarity between Ireland and America of colonizing experience and native resistance to overt conquest was well understood in the seventeenth century. Soldiers settled in America who had fought in Ireland. Samuel Gorton of Rhode Island warned Massachusetts's Puritans against trying to conquer the Narragansett Indians: "I remember the time of the warres in Ireland (when I was young, in Queene Elizabeths dayes of famous memory) where much English blood was spilt by a people much like unto these, the Earl of Terrone being their leader, where many valiant souldiers lost their lives, both horse, and foot, by means of woods, bushes, boggs, and quagmires."<sup>8</sup>

William Penn used revenues from his Irish estates to help finance Pennsylvania, and those Irish estates were his inheritance from a grant by conqueror Oliver Cromwell to William's father, Admiral Penn. Many of the early Quaker settlers of Pennsylvania, like Penn's secretary James Logan, came from English or Scotch families in Ireland, and everyone knows of the eighteenth-century Scotch-Irish migration to America as well as the wholehearted participation of that immigrant group in the Revolution. Historical sources also note repeatedly that the Scotch-Irish settlers in the back country of America dealt harshly and fiercely with the indigenous population, and we need not doubt where that habit had been acquired. It is still in evidence in the lands of Cromwell's conquest.

The Irish precedent sheds light on one aspect of the American Revolution that especially needs new study. It is the struggle of three kinds of political entity, one of which has been insufficiently recognized, to achieve sovereignty in effective fact as well as legal

fiction. Like the Irish tribes, the Indian tribes formed governments on principles of kinship and local neighborhood, and in the mass they claimed lands by right of immemorial habitation. The British crown and its colonists separately claimed the same lands by a variety of other asserted rights. Royal and colonial governments were formed on the principles of the impersonal hierarchic state which, by most writers, has been the only form recognized as "true" government. The ideological reduction of tribal right to a level below state right is an inheritance from the many-faceted justifications of the Irish campaigns of England. When these motives and beliefs are taken into consideration, the American Revolution appears as a tripartite struggle for sovereignty over the lands west of the Appalachian Mountains. The point will be discussed in more detail later on.

English policies in the American colonies underwent rapid change. In the early seventeenth century the English created beachhead bases in the midst of overwhelmingly superior Indian numbers. Never mind the myths about conquest of the wilderness.<sup>9</sup> The English invaders were scared to death of the wilderness and wanted nothing to do with it. They huddled near the shore and near the native communities whose foodstuffs sustained the ill-provided colonists and whose trade in furs defrayed colonizing costs. Epidemics of European diseases, together with continued European immigration, transformed numerical proportions near the coast, and with the change in numbers came a change in policy. At Jamestown the outnumbered English had tried at first to vassalize the native chiefs to create a feudal hierarchy.<sup>10</sup> With the growth of English population and the concomitant decline of the local Indians, the colonists institutionalized patron-client relationships with friendly tribes, occasionally reducing a hostile tribe by conquest to the status of subjects. There were not many such subject tribes because war against Indians was doubtful in utility and expensive in practice. We should not forget that the Powhatan rising of 1622 cost the Virginia Company its charter as well as a toll in persons and property, and the Second Puritan Conquest (misdubbed King Philip's War) so weakened even proud Massachusetts Bay that its charter also became vulnerable.

Most political dealings with Indians were conducted by diplomatic treaty. The formal protocol of these treaties became standard and ritualized. The point of noticing them here is that these procedures involved formal English recognition of the independence and jurisdictions of Indian tribes. In the concise phrase of New York's Governor Dongan, the Europeans could not "give law" to the "wild" unconquered tribes, so independence was recognized because it had to be.<sup>11</sup> But such de facto recognition was a matter of expediency rather than a de jure acknowledgment of tribal sovereignty. Tribes were not recognized as having a right to punish British subjects for committing crime against Indians in Indian territory; they were required by menace of economic or military sanctions to deliver the accused to a British colony for trial under colonial law. And British statesmen said different things at different treaty tables. When they dealt with European powers they laid claim to British sovereignty over precisely the same territories that they conceded to be under tribal jurisdiction when they dealt with the Indians. This equivocation continued through the Royal Proclamation of 1763 in which the crown

only "reserved" the lands west of the Appalachians as "hunting territories" for the Indians.<sup>12</sup>

The problem in this connection is the operational meaning of the legal concepts of "sovereignty" and "right." Did the crown have a sovereign right to territories it had never conquered or governed merely because the inhabitants of those lands were pagans who had government in the tribal form rather than the state form? My question is a rephrasing of savagery versus civilization. I suppose that the answer is an equation of rights with power.<sup>13</sup> Though the British had not yet delivered their power in the American west, they knew that they could in due course. It is well, however, to disentangle facts of power from ideological justifications for the use of power.

In historical actuality the crown lawyers modified and redefined sovereign right considerably during the colonial era. The earlier definition was absolute. The king's possession and authority were unlimited over lands within his claimed boundaries, except for restrictions he had imposed upon himself by sealed charters. His claims extended from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Only the counterclaims of other Christian European sovereignties were recognized as debatable.<sup>14</sup> Indian tribes had no standing in law, and Indian persons were conceded only a philosophically derived "natural" right to lands they had cultivated, fenced, or otherwise improved. If the Virginia colonists sometimes paid valuable goods for native quitclaims, they did so only for expediency's sake and did not bother to write deeds of cession.<sup>15</sup> In English legal theory at the time, such deeds would have been redundant since the Virginians had ample authority from their royal charter to take all the land they wanted.

The absolute theory was expressed explicitly when England and the Dutch States General quarreled over conflicting claims to what the Dutch called New Netherland, but English lawyers were confounded when the Dutch produced written documents from Indian chiefs as evidence that the Dutch had legally acquired what the Dutch characterized as Indian rights of possession. (If these terms seem shiftily vague, it is because the diplomats on both sides used them for effect in argument without regard to niceties of definition.) The Dutch had made and paid for their deeds for purely utilitarian purposes -- i.e., precisely to use in their anticipated negotiations with the English -- but the English were shocked by the maneuver into changing their own practices and subsequently refining their theory of sovereign right.<sup>16</sup>

Practically speaking, all the English colonies adopted the practice of taking Indian deeds as a means of insuring clear title to real estate, and different colonies used such deeds against each other in squabbles over boundaries in much the same way that the Dutch had first used their deeds against the British.<sup>17</sup> Widespread adoption of the practice led naturally to rational justification for it and its inclusion in codes of moral conduct. For example, the Anglican Archbishop of Canterbury cautioned William Penn not to neglect to compensate the Indians for agreements to quit their lands, and Penn promised good title to English land speculators, guaranteeing that their purchases from him would be secured by his prior discharge of what he called the Indian "incumbency."<sup>18</sup> No mention of such a necessity had been made in Penn's charter from King Charles II, which granted all royal rights in Pennsylvania's soil except for stipulations about certain minerals. It is clear that both Canterbury and

Penn recognized an Indian right that somewhat circumscribed the royal right. The multitude of Indian deeds for lands in New England add substantiating evidence that such recognition prevailed there also. One must be careful in evaluating the attitude. A cynical historian has remarked that Indian right was recognized by the English only for the purpose of acquiring it, and there is considerable merit in his comment.<sup>19</sup>

With this background we are ready to turn to the curious inversions of rationalization that took place in and after 1763. Whereas the crown had once asserted its absolute sovereignty without recognition of any Indian right, the Royal Proclamation of 1763 effectively rescinded the crown's previous colonial charters in their boundary provisions, using Indian right as part of the rationale for resumption of immediate royal jurisdiction over the trans-Appalachian west.<sup>20</sup> The frontier line then surveyed and mapped under royal supervision proved to be an ineffectual barrier against English encroachment by individual persons, but the proclamation line did put a permanent limit to the expansion of jurisdiction of the chartered colonies.

On the other hand, as the ministry leaned gradually toward enforcement of the limit against persons as well as jurisdictions, colonial land speculators such as George Croghan and Samuel Wharton began to argue that Indian right was so superior to crown right that a purchase of territory could be made legally from the Indians without royal participation or permission.<sup>21</sup> George Washington conspired with a frontier agent "to secure some of the most valuable lands in the King's part (i.e., the protected Indian lands) which I think may be accomplished after a while notwithstanding the Proclamation that restrains it at present and prohibits the Settling of them at all."<sup>22</sup> Such arguments and actions fell just short of formal denial of British sovereignty in the west. They were based on the premise of an Indian right in property exclusive of jurisdiction, and a good lawyer could make much of such a distinction in court, but the practical and political effect was disobedience to the commands of the government in London as the ministers of that government well understood.

Though the foregoing description stresses the initiatives of Europeans and Euramericans, the true situation requires attention also to the active roles played by Indians. A matrix of varied relationships comprehended reciprocal action and response. The military and economic sorts of relationships have been much studied. Many books exist about the roles played by Indian warriors as friends and foes of the colonists. Much attention is now being given to that pervasive institution, the fur trade. Yet it seems to me that some of the best of these studies are flawed by omission of a third kind of relationship that organized both the others -- the political. Politics determined which side the hunter traded with as well as which side he fought on. On the large scale, trade took place between tribes and colonies that had previously treated diplomatically for relations of peace and alliance. The tribe whose trade was monopolized by a particular colony became a client of that colony, dependent on its goods and good will though maintaining independent tribal government. The colony, in turn, became dependent on the tribe to furnish offensive and defensive military power and to provide the rich profits of the trade. Innumerable gradations and subtle distinctions can be discerned in these patron-client relationships.

A particular network of treaty-made affiliations, with its military and commercial organizations, was at the center of British attention from 1750 to 1783. It played a crucial role in destroying French power in North America, but it exacted a price in promises from the crown; and when those promises became the policies of the Royal Proclamation and the Quebec Act they bitterly antagonized many of the most influential colonial leaders. The alliance network was called the Covenant Chain. Its dominant tribes were the Six Nations of the Iroquois League, and it included the strong Delaware and Shawnee tribes in the Ohio region when that area became the focus of English and French imperial rivalry.

The Covenant Chain had originated in 1677 as a multiple alliance of British colonies and Indian tribes linked through the special patron-client relationship of New York and the Iroquois League. Although Indians in the Chain did much heavy fighting against the French in the seventeenth century, they were obliged by heavy losses to conclude treaties of military neutrality in 1700-1701, and they acted as a buffer between the empires until the Seven Years War.<sup>23</sup> The primary commercial ties of the Chain were with the British, and because of the desirability of maintaining trade on favorable conditions the tribes of the Chain permitted British encroachment on their lands of a sort that elsewhere had created bloodshed. In New England and the South, the Indians had stood and fought until they were physically conquered and dispossessed. (This is not quite the same process as what is so often called the inability of savage hunters to sustain themselves in the presence of civilized farmers.) King Philip's Wampanoags, for example, fell back to their gardens and fisheries on Narragansett Bay -- a bit west of Plymouth town, to be sure -- where they made a last stand. But the Covenant Chain tribes carefully and patiently negotiated cession after cession of tribal territory and emigrated, village by village,<sup>24</sup> until they became too desperate to tolerate further dispossession.

As the settlers of Virginia's Ohio Company and the garrisons of French Canada converged upon the Ohio, the tribes who had retreated there through Covenant Chain arrangements decided to fend for themselves. They broke with their Iroquois leaders, made terms with the French, and carried the hatchet to the back country settlers of Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania. The Iroquois themselves had become so disgusted by fraudulent purchases of their own lands that they denounced their ancient alliance with New York.<sup>25</sup> These developments caused the crown to divest its provincial governments of authority to treat with the tribes, and to create the royal agencies that would thenceforward have exclusive jurisdiction over Indian affairs. In 1755 William Johnson was made first Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern District, which meant in effect the region of the Covenant Chain tribes, and he promptly began to link the Chain together again, but this time with the crown instead of a colony as a patron-protector.<sup>26</sup>

A second Superintendent was appointed to look after the Indians of the south, but I shall concentrate on the Northern District for simplicity of discourse (and because I know little about the south). Like other agencies of the plastic colonial era, the office of Superintendent changed rapidly with the times. Though its function was at first almost wholly military, and its incumbent was subordinate to the



commander-in-chief of British forces in America, the Superintendent soon established himself as an independent officer with wide powers, responsible directly to the ministry in London.<sup>27</sup>

The almost casual procedure by which the Superintendency came into being tends to veil its great importance in terms of British constitutional law for the colonies. It preceded the Royal Proclamation by eight years in revoking powers that colonies had long exerted. Formally speaking, colonial governments had interpreted their powers as charter-delegated sovereignty over lands and persons within their jurisdictions, including Indian lands and persons. Practically speaking, the colonies had been unable to subject most Indians to colonial law. The difference between the Indians' theoretical status and the actual situation gave the crown a compellingly urgent opening to do by administrative decree what would normally have required time-consuming court action. In establishing the Superintendencies the crown not only moved to participate directly in Indian affairs, but it also rescinded colonial charters insofar as they implied jurisdiction over Indian persons. In the wartime crisis of 1755 no colony felt impelled to make a legal challenge to the crown's assuming the expense of managing Indian diplomacy. The precedent thus established and accepted for royal supervision of Indian persons made possible the next step in 1763 when the Royal Proclamation took Indian lands as well as persons out of colonial jurisdictions. What the Proclamation did by mere administrative decree was to revoke the boundaries specifically mentioned in the sea-to-sea charters of several colonies, notably expanding Virginia. Since the boundary provisions were equal in validity to the charters' other clauses, the Proclamation made all charter guarantees vulnerable. Again, the effect was muted by emergency and by the assumption that the Proclamation Line would be a temporary expedient.

Constitutionally the Quebec Act carried the Royal Proclamation a step further. It confirmed and made permanent the western boundaries of the seaboard colonies, and it gave the land they claimed by charter to the new British province of Quebec. This was no longer a mere administrative decree that might be cancelled by pressure on a new ministry or challenged in court action for the restoration of charter right. It was an Act of Parliament revocable only by further Parliamentary legislation.

Substantively the Act mapped the trans-Appalachian west, as far south as the Ohio River, into the province of Quebec. It gave civil jurisdiction over European settlements into the hands of the province's royal governor who was unhandicapped by a representative assembly and who had a standing army under his command. Jurisdiction over Indian lands and persons within the same area was given to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, who became solely responsible for regulation of the trade with Indians, negotiation of Indian treaties, and purchases of Indian lands.

The Quebec Act was more than the fulfilment of a developing crown policy for the west, as has been proposed. It was a constitutional revolution (or counter-revolution) of the first importance, supported by an administrative structure capable of enforcing it. This, I suggest, is the explanation for the special fury that the Quebec Act aroused in the seaboard colonies. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 had generated no such hostility because everyone, including ministers of

the crown, had assumed that the Proclamation Line was only a temporary measure to conciliate the dangerously aroused tribes. Although the chartered boundaries of the old colonies were cut short at the mountains, land speculators formed companies to found new western colonies and their lobbyists swarmed over London. Important royal officials, including ministers of government, accepted shares in the speculator's schemes and exerted influence in their favor. In America the Superintendants of Indian Affairs cooperated with the speculators and participated in their schemes. The Proclamation Line was bent gratifyingly in large salients westward, and backwoods squatters ignored the line entirely.<sup>28</sup>

The Quebec Act brought drastic change. Though its provisions for religious toleration in Canada probably aroused genuine horror in a few bigots of the sort who saw Jesuits under every bed, the anti-Catholic outcry bears all the marks of demagogic propaganda. Behind it was the realization of an accomplished fact and potential menace. Factually, the Act had wiped out, at a single stroke, every speculator in western lands. Potentially, it threatened Parliamentary revocation of the colonists' most cherished charter rights. It fixed imperial sovereignty in Parliament itself and thus destroyed the colonists' old argument that their governments were responsible directly to the crown, bypassing Parliament. The colonial gentry understood these implications. Great speculator Samuel Wharton ceased his lobbying in London and returned to America to become a member of the Continental Congress. Great speculator George Washington took command of a new colonial army. Great speculator Benjamin Franklin held out a while longer to negotiate unsuccessfully in London for the Act's repeal, then returned to Pennsylvania to assume the chief post in the new Revolutionary government there. Even before the colonies declared statehood independent of the crown, they sent their armies to invade Quebec, and Franklin followed after the troops. If the west was to be within Quebec's boundaries, the Revolutionaries intended that Quebec should be within theirs.<sup>29</sup>

Let us return to the Indians' participation in these historical processes. In 1750 they had instantly recognized the significance of Christopher Gist's western exploratory mission for the Ohio Company of Virginia. They gave Gist a bad scare then, but he escaped violence by lying to them about his purpose.<sup>30</sup> Young George Washington dissembled also when Washington journeyed to order the French to leave the Ohio region so that Virginia might occupy it. Superficially the Indians accepted the intruders' falsehoods at face value, but their desperate counselings and treaty consultations show that they understood well what was happening.<sup>31</sup> As one warrior cogently summarized, the French claimed all the land on one side of the Ohio River and the English claimed all the land on the other side -- where was the Indians' land?<sup>32</sup>

Though the Indians were formally independent, their technological dependence on European trade goods obliged them always to be on good terms with at least one source of supply. An Indian with a musket had to get powder and shot from a European; when the ammunition ran out, the hunter went hungry and the warrior cease to be formidable. Thus, after the defeat of Edward Braddock and the consequent English retreat from the west, the Ohio Indians became French allies out of necessity. English trade was cut off, and French trade was contingent on alli-

ance. Then, too, the scalping parties that raided the English back settlements were paying off many old scores. However, their alliance with the French came from no love of French occupation. When opportunity presented itself at Easton in 1758, the Ohio tribes and the Iroquois negotiated a bargain with the British that is often seen as the precursor of the Royal Proclamation of 1763. At Easton the province of Pennsylvania formally deeded back to the Iroquois a large tract of Ohio territory that had earlier been purchased by irregular methods. In effect, Pennsylvania recognized an Indian boundary at the Appalachian Mountains. There was nothing new about this procedure so far as Pennsylvania was concerned; it had recognized Indian boundaries since its beginnings. The novelty at Easton was the crown's participation directly through George Croghan, the deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs for the Northern District. In return for British promises the Ohio Indians abandoned the French, and the Iroquois took up the British hatchet.<sup>33</sup>

The Indians thus fulfilled their commitments. The British, however, made fine distinctions between the impression they had conveyed orally and the actual commitments they had made in writing. As to commitments, Pennsylvania had deeded back to the Iroquois the trans-Appalachian lands. How that act was represented to the Indians was concisely expressed by Sir William Johnson at a subsequent treaty in the spring of 1759: "Brethren . . . you see while the French keep their Forts in the midst of Your Country and fight with us in order to secure the possession of them, we give up those lands which you had sold us."<sup>34</sup> About the same time, however, the Governor of Pennsylvania clarified for the Indians the difference between legal possession and military occupation. In a message to the tribes, Governor Denny explained that, "the English intended this Campaign to oblige the French to abandon all the Country on the Ohio, without any design of settling those Lands themselves, they only propose to Establish a Trade with the Western Indians, on a fair and good footing, and as a protection for their Traders and such Indians as incline to trade with us, to build one or more Magazines for Indians Goods, fortifying the same in such a Manner as to prevent any bad designs of the French. Brethren, I now acquaint you that the King intends to continue his Forces on the Western Frontiers until the French have abandoned all their Forts there . . . it is his Majesty's orders, that a place of strength be built on or near the Ruins of the late French Fort, in order to protect the Indians, and place our good Brethren the Indians as well as ourselves, in a safe, and respectable condition."<sup>35</sup>

What made sense to His Majesty's forces made nonsense at the council fires. Forts occupied by British troops looked to the Indians very much like forts occupied by French troops. The "protection" of these troops, British or French, assumed the form of depriving the Indians of capacity to ally themselves as they pleased. When army commanders became concerned about tribal restlessness, they stopped the trade in necessary guns and ammunition. It was a remedy worse than the ailment, for it convinced the Indians that protection meant subjection. They found munitions through clandestine trade and rose in the Indian war for independence misnamed Pontiac's Conspiracy. The same warriors who had forced the French to abandon Fort Duquesne now laid siege to Fort Pitt.<sup>36</sup> Delaware chief Shingas was at their head in both instances.

They were defeated by measures that would be called savage if they had used them. Civilized Lord Amherst suggested the Indians' extirpation by germ warfare, courtly Major Bouquet passed the suggestion along through channels, and the commander at Fort Pitt summoned the besieging chiefs to a conference in the fort at which he presented them with blankets from the smallpox hospital. An epidemic followed. Chief Shingas, among hundreds of others, disappeared from history. The siege was lifted. It is hard to believe, however, the affair reconciled the Indians<sup>37</sup> to the presence in their territory of British forts and garrisons.

The ministry in London recognized the need for political measures to quiet the tribes, if only because the military measures were so expensive. To offset the budget deficits continuing after the long war with France, London sought to reduce the size of its occupation forces to a minimum, and to compel the colonies to pay for the minimum.<sup>38</sup> London's first objective was implemented by the Royal Proclamation of 1763; its second by the Stamp Tax. Neither action was notably successful though the Proclamation momentarily persuaded the Indians to negotiate rather than fight. Colonists viewed it more cynically. George Washington<sup>39</sup> called it a temporary measure and added to his western investments. The garrisons remained (though diminished), the land speculators swarmed over Whitehall, and the "freedom-loving pioneers" continued to invade and seize Indians lands, defying simultaneously the governments of tribe and empire. It soon became apparent that there was no sound reason for western Indians to believe that the Royal Proclamation had guaranteed their territorial or jurisdictional integrity.

As tensions mounted in the west, riots and criminality spread in the seaboard towns. London saw a dilemma. To protect the provinces from hostile Indians instigated by French agents provocateurs, the limited numbers of available troops were required at their posts in the backlands, but to quell the revolutionary violence the same troops were needed in the towns. For a time the ministry tried to muddle through without a clear policy. The western garrisons were thinned out by transferring troops to the eastern towns. Some forts were evacuated, Fort Pitt among them.

Virginia's expansionists immediately seized their chance. Virginia had long quarreled with Pennsylvania about jurisdiction at the forks of the Ohio, and Governor Lord Dunmore now proposed to win the dispute on the principle of possession being most of the law. He conspired with a gang of determinedly aggressive Virginians to seize abandoned Fort Pitt. They renamed it, appropriately enough, Fort Dunmore, and went out to hunt Indians. Their objective was to establish rights of conquest to confirm Virginia's charter claims against Pennsylvania and the crown, and it did not matter to them that the crown had guaranteed protection and peace by the Proclamation of 1763. They attacked the nearby Delawares and Shawnees in what we call Lord Dunmore's War.<sup>40</sup>

Dunmore succeeded militarily, but failed politically. While he campaigned, the ministry came to a firm decision that the Indians must be confirmed and protected in their territorial rights as the surest way of pacifying them while all attention of imperial government should be concentrated on bringing the provinces back to obedience. The new policy was manifested by the Quebec Act and even more

emphatically in the instructions issued to Quebec's Governor Carleton for enforcement of the Act; and the troops that formerly had protected the colonials by controlling the tribes were now directed to protect the tribes by controlling the colonials.<sup>41</sup> This was the very brief moment of formal victory for the Indians' struggle for some sort of independence. Both aspects of it angered the colonists. The enforcement of an Indian frontier line was galling enough. The reinforcement of royal garrisons in the towns compounded the perceived injury.

Here is an interesting historical might-have-been. The guidelines for enforcing the Quebec Act provided that the Superintendent of Indian Affairs should have "the conduct of all public affairs relative to the Indians." No land purchase, nor any treaty, could be made without his participation. He would have a judge's powers in Indian territory over traders as well as Indians, and Indians would be accepted as witnesses in his courts on equal terms with Englishmen. Permanent settlement of new European communities in Indian territory was totally prohibited, though the pre-established isolated French communities were allowed to continue. Most interesting of all, the crown proposed to alter drastically the centuries-long procedure of dealing with Indians through the treaty form of diplomatic negotiation. While the old form was not banned, most of its functions would obviously be performed by a new permanent structure of administration for each tribe in which tribal chiefs would act jointly with British commissaries appointed by the Superintendent. Such terms make plain that Indian independence would be protected only vis-a-vis the British colonies, but they show as plainly that the intention to protect had become genuine. One wonders -- if the Revolution had not overthrown the Superintendents of Indian Affairs, might the Indians within their jurisdictions have developed provincial governments as the hybrid offspring of the mating of tribe and state? The Cherokee Nation of the early nineteenth century, before its destruction by Jacksonian Democrats, tempts one to dream of what the Iroquois Covenant Chain might have become under royal protection and the particular patronage of the lords of Johnson Manor.

But the Revolution came, and the experiment was aborted. I shall not attempt in this essay to trace the participation of Indians in the battles of the Revolution. The important point here is what the Revolutionary states aimed at in triumph. By their treaty of peace with Britain they acquired boundaries at the Mississippi River, which is to say that they took to themselves a fictional right of sovereignty that had been invented by court lawyers in Paris and London on<sup>42</sup> the basis of European "discovery" and the Christian religion. What sovereignty meant operationally in these circumstances was that Britain and France would not interfere with United States assertions of jurisdiction within the recognized territories -- a promise that the British violated early and often. Indian rights were not mentioned. The assumption that Indians were savages implied the further assumption that tribal governments were morally inferior to the state-form governments of civilized people, and their moral inferiority implied legal subordination. When the British crown conveyed its claims of sovereignty to the United States, it exacted promises of restitution for Euramerican Loyalists whose property had been confiscated by the Revolutionaries. The crown's Indian allies, regardless of their property rights recognized in the

Quebec Act, were abandoned except for refuge provided for them in Canada.

In 1784 the new United States began to formulate policy toward their paper empire west of the Appalachians. Their commissioners imposed a victor's peace upon the beaten Iroquois at the Treaty of Fort Stanwix, asserting "rights of conquest" to Indian territories.<sup>43</sup>

But the tribes were not having it. A western confederation set itself up in place of, and independent of, the old Iroquois Covenant Chain. The Delawares, Shawnees, Wyandots, Miamis, and satellite tribal fragments rejected the Treaty of Fort Stanwix along with any assumption that the Iroquois could determine their commitments or speak in their behalf. The war of the United States with great Britain had ended in Paris in 1783, and its war with the Iroquois had ended at Fort Stanwix in 1784, but the war with the western tribes continued through many skirmishes, three more large campaigns, and ten more years. Two of those campaigns resulted in humiliating disasters. The third was planned by Major General Anthony Wayne with more respect for the military abilities of his opponents, and he won the Battle of Fallen Timbers in 1794.

This is commonly called a "decisive" battle that "forced" the Indians to sue for peace. Secretary of War Timothy Pickering thought otherwise. He sent extremely detailed instructions to General Wayne to make all necessary concessions for the sake of obtaining "such a peace as shall let the Indians go away with their minds at ease." The emphasis was Pickering's own, and he gave a reason: "Otherwise it may be but the era of renewed hostility."<sup>44</sup>

Proceeding systematically, Pickering first abolished the legal basis laid down so forcefully at the Fort Stanwix treaty. "I am well satisfied, that whatever claim the Six Nations might formerly have to the lands Westward of the Allegany, they long ago relinquished the same to the Delawares, and others of the present Western Indians. The relinquishment of the Country, therefore, to the United States by the Six Nations I consider as affording us but the shadow of a title to it."<sup>45</sup>

Which, in plainer English, meant that the armies directed by Pickering and his predecessor Knox had been fighting a war of aggression against tribes defending their proper territories, and had failed to win their objectives. Pickering seized the temporary advantage created by the victory at Fallen Timbers to make a strategic retreat. "Peace and not increase of territory has been the object of this expensive War."<sup>46</sup> Like the British after the Seven Years War, the United States had found that occupation of Indian territory was too costly for the results achieved. Pickering therefore abandoned the claims that had rationalized and justified the policy, and he gave Wayne new guidelines to shape the Treaty of Greenville in 1795. "The unfortunate construction put by the first Commissioners on our treaty of peace with Great Britain and thence continued by General St. Clair in 1789 ... a construction as unfounded in itself as it was unintelligible and mysterious to the Indians -- a construction which, with the use made of it by the British Advisors of those Indians, has probably been the main spring of the distressing war on our frontiers ... cannot be too explicitly renounced." Pickering knew the price of peace: "the land is theirs (and this we acknowledge)."<sup>47</sup>

The Greenville treaty re-established a formally agreed boundary between the United States and the tribes. From the former claims of absolute sovereignty it salvaged only a right of pre-emption for the United States, requiring only that when they wished to cede lands no other nation should be the recipient. To this the tribes agreed.<sup>48</sup> Whether the cessions that eventually followed were made fairly and aboveboard can be no concern of this paper. The nineteenth century's history of encroachment and invasion is to be found in the records of the United States Court of Claims. It suffices here to show that the Indians' long, hard struggles in the eighteenth century against France, Britain, and the United States were not wasted. The price in lives was great, but the tribes who fought for freedom kept it for their own generation. Even today, though tribal independence is long gone, their descendants reap financial benefits from the legal principles established then.

This reinterpretation of the American Revolution implies revision of customary assumptions about the origins and growth of the society called American. The frontier thesis of Frederick Jackson Turner defines American society as exclusively European in origin, being transformed into its uniquely American character by struggle across a line of confrontation with an absolutely distinct society of Indians. This is a view that equates legal boundaries with social cleavage. The frontier between territory under tribal government and territory under state-form government becomes the frontier between savagery and civilization, and civilization is not only justified but morally required to conquer savagery.

I suggest that societies are not to be defined by lawyers. Although Indians and Europeans maintained distinct cultural traditions in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (and still today to a degree) they were linked and associated by institutions of trade, politics, and cultural exchange. Both peoples were profoundly changed by interaction with each other, and interaction took the form of social cooperation as well as conflict. An emerging large society comprised all the peoples of this continent including besides Indians and Europeans those Afro-Americans whose role could not be discussed within the limits of this essay. What is unique about this large society is precisely its mixture. We could not be what we are if we were no more than a nation of immigrants from Europe.

## Notes

1. This statement probably needs some sort of qualification in view of the disclosures that Jefferson kept a slave as his mistress. In his utterances the relationship between rhetoric and belief is not easy to identify.
2. Discussed in Jennings, The Invasion of America: Indians, Colonialism, and the Cant of Conquest, published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture (Chapel Hill, NC, 1975), chs. 2, 7, 8.
3. The Papers of Sir William Johnson, edited by James Sullivan, et al., 14 vols. (Albany, N.Y., 1921-1965), XI, 925.
4. The best known statement of this point of view is in Frederick Jackson Turner, "The Significance of the Frontier in American History," The Frontier in American History (New York, 1920), 3.
5. Jack M. Sosin, Whitehall and the Wilderness: The Middle West in British Colonial Policy, 1760-1775 (Lincoln, Neb., 1961), chs. 4, 5.
6. Cf. Louise Phelps Kellogg, "The American Colonial Charter: A Study of English Administration in Relation Thereto, Chiefly after 1668," American Historical Association Annual Report (Washington, D.C., 1903), 191-201; Julius Goebel, Jr., "The Matrix of Empire," introductory essay to J. H. Smith, Appeals to the Privy Council from American Plantations (New York, 1950), xiii-lxi; "An Act for reuniting to the Crown the Government of several Colonies and plantations in America," MSS., Board of Trade, Proprieties, 6/1, 16, Public Record Office, London.
7. J. F. Lydon, The Lordship of Ireland in the Middle Ages (Toronto, 1972), 270-278; David Beers Quinn, "The Early Interpretation of Poynings' Law, 1494-1534," Irish Historical Studies 2 (1941), 241-254.
8. Samuel Gorton to John Winthrop, Jr., 11 Sep 1675, in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 4th ser., VII (Boston, 1865), 629-630.
9. Perry Miller has been much quoted in regard to a supposed "errand into the wilderness" motive for Puritan colonization, but Miller fudged time relationships. His source for the errand motive is a sermon made in 1670. Among the actual Puritan colonists of 1629-30, as Alan Heimert has found, there was no desire to venture into the wilderness. Miller's methods are as questionable as his assertions. See Perry Miller, Errand into the Wilderness (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), 1-15; Alan Heimert, "Puritanism, the Wilderness, and the Frontier," New England Quarterly 26 (1953), 361-382; George Selement, "Perry Miller: A Note on His Sources in The New England Mind: The Seventeenth Century," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 31 (1974), 453-464.
10. John Smith, A Map of Virginia, in The Jamestown Voyages Under the First Charter, 1606-1609, edited by Philip L. Barbour, Works Issued by the Hakluyt Society, 2d ser., CXXXVI, 2 vols, (Cambridge, 1969), II, 410-414.
11. Dongan to Lord President Sunderland, 19 Feb 1688, and Dongan's Third Paper to the French Agents, Feb 1688, in Documents Relative



- to the Colonial History of New York, edited by Edmond B. O'Callaghan and Berthold Fernow, 15 vols. (Albany, N.Y., 1856-1887), III, 511, 525. (Hereinafter N.Y.Col.Docs.) Dongan's principles were in conflict with his practice here; his so-called "subject" Indians asserted independence vigorously. Ibid., IX, 384-385. In reality, Dongan treated with the Iroquois instead of commanding them, and he accepted rejection of his proposals from time to time.
12. General Thomas Gage to Sir William Johnson, 7 Oct 1772, in Johnson Papers, XII, 994-995.
  13. Cf. Joseph Story, Commentaries on the Constitution of the United States: with a Preliminary Review of the Constitutional History of the Colonies and States Before the Adoption of the Constitution, 3d ed., 2 vols. (Boston, 1858), I, 5.
  14. Answer to the Remonstrance of the Dutch Ambassadors, April-May 1632, N.Y.Col.Docs., I, 58.
  15. See, for example, the undeeded exchange of Henry Spelman for an Indian village. Spelman, "Relation of Virginia," in Travels and Works of Captain John Smith, edited by Edward Arber and A. G. Bradley, 2 vols. (Edinburgh, 1910), I, cii.
  16. Jennings, Invasion of America, 131-134.
  17. Ibid., 134-142; chs. 12-18.
  18. William Penn, "Some Account of Pennsylvania," in Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware, 1630-1710, edited by A. C. Myers (New York, 1912), 208.
  19. George E. Ellis, "Indians of Eastern Massachusetts," in Memorial History of Boston, edited by Justin Winsor, 4 vols. (Boston, 1880-1881), I, 247-250.
  20. The Proclamation (with many associated papers) is in Documents Relating to the Constitutional History of Canada, 1759-1791, edited by Adam Shortt and Arthur G. Doughty, Canadian Archives Sessional Paper No. 18 (Ottawa, 1907), 119-123.
  21. Sosin, Whitehall and the Wilderness, 195-196.
  22. Washington to Wm. Crawford, 21 Sep 1767, in The Writings of George Washington, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, 39 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1931-1944), II, 468. In the same letter, Washington suggested that Crawford "evade" Pennsylvania's law by a device of registering an illicitly large tract of land in small parcels, this to be done with the connivance of "an Acquaintance of mine" in the land office. Bernhard Knollenberg has found that Washington also "infringed" Virginia law; seizing lands to which he was not entitled, surveying them illicitly through a man unqualified by law who laid them out in violation of legal stipulations as to size and location, and all to the detriment of Washington's Virginia comrades in arms for whom these lands had been intended. "The more he got of the allotted 200,000 acres, the less was available for the enlisted men to whom it was promised." Knollenberg, George Washington: The Virginia Period, 1732-1775 (Durham, N.C., 1964), 93-100; quote at 99.
  23. Different interpretations are given in W. J. Eccles, Frontenac: The Courtier Governor (Toronto, 1959), ch. 15; and A. F. C. Wallace, "Origins of Iroquois Neutrality: The Grand Settlement of 1701," Pennsylvania History 24 (1957), 223-235.

24. See Francis Paul Jennings, "Miquon's Passing: Indian-European Relations in Colonial Pennsylvania, 1674 to 1755," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania (1965), chs. 8-13.
25. Treaty minutes, 16 June 1753, In N.Y.Col.Docs., VI, 788.
26. See John R. Alden, "The Albany Congress and the Creation of the Indian Superintendencies," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 27 (1940), 193-210.
27. Ibid.; for the southern superintendency see The Appalachian Indian Frontier: The Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755, edited by Wilbur R. Jacobs (1954, reprinted Lincoln, Neb., 1967).
28. See Jack M. Sosin, The Revolutionary Frontier, 1763-1783, Histories of the American Frontier edited by Ray Allen Billington (New York, 1967), chs. 3, 4; Louis De Vorsey, Jr., The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775 (Chapel Hill, N. C., 1966); Merrill Jensen, The Founding of a Nation: A History of the American Revolution, 1763-1775, (New York, 1968), 387-391.
29. Sosin, Whitehall and the Wilderness, ch. 10; Gerald Stourzh, Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy (Chicago, 1954), 198-199. It may be noted that one of Franklin's fellow commissioners was the Jesuit priest John Carroll, and that the commissioners were authorized to extend full tolerance to the Roman Catholics of Canada. The religious outcry against the Quebec Act was sheer demogagy. See William Renwick Riddell, "Benjamin Franklin's Mission to Canada and the Causes of its Failure," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography 48 (1924), 130-135.
30. Gist's Journal, 1750, in George Mercer Papers Relating to the Ohio Company of Virginia, edited by Lois Mulkearn (Pittsburgh, 1954), 7-8, 9-10.
31. "Journey to the French Commandant," The Diaries of George Washington, 1748-1799, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick, 4 vols, (Boston, 1925), I, 44, 52-54, 57.
32. Gist's Journal, 1751, in George Mercer Papers, 39.
33. Paul A. W. Wallace, Conrad Weiser, 1696-1760, Friend of Colonist and Mohawk (Philadelphia, 1945), chs. 59-61; Lawrence Henry Gipson, The British Empire Before the American Revolution, 15 vols. (New York, 1936-1970), VII, 278-279.
34. N.Y.Col.Docs., VII, 388.
35. Johnson Papers, III, 34-35.
36. Howard H. Peckham, Pontiac and the Indian Uprising (Princeton, 1947; reprint Chicago, 1961), 106-111, 166.
37. Ibid., 170; Francis Parkman, The Conspiracy of Pontiac ... New Library ed., 2 vols, (Boston, 1909), II, 44-45; Bernhard Knollenberg, "General Amherst and Germ Warfare," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 41 (1954), 489-494, Knollenberg and Donald H. Kent, "Communications," Ibid., 41 (1955), 762-763.
38. Sosin, Whitehall and the Wilderness, 4-5, ch. 4.
39. Merrill Jensen, The Founding of a Nation: A History of the American Revolution, 1763-1766 (New York, 1968), 387; Sosin, Whitehall and the Wilderness, 107.
40. Jack M. Sosin, "The British Indian Department and Dunmore's War," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 74 (1966), 34-50; Thomas Perkins Abernethy, Western Lands and the American Revolution (1937; reprinted New York, 1959), ch. 6.

41. Documents of Canada, eds., Shortt and Doughty, 401-405, 428.
42. Sosin, Revolutionary Frontier, 146-150; Barbara Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution (Syracuse, NY, 1972), 260-262. Sovereignty is discussed in Jennings, Invasion of America, 43-45, 82-83, 105, 135-136.
43. Wallace, Anthony F. C., The Death and Rebirth of the Seneca (New York, 1970), 151-152; Graymont, Iroquois in the American Revolution, 276-284, Donald H. Kent, History of Pennsylvania Purchases from the Indians, The Garland American Indian Ethnohistory Series: Iroquis Indians, I (New York, 1974), 72, 115, 124.
44. Secretary of War Timothy Pickering to Major General Anthony Wayne, 8 April 1795, in Anthony Wayne, A Name in Arms: Soldier, Diplomat Defender of Expansion Westward of A Nation, transcribed and edited by Richard C. Knopf (Pittsburgh, 1960), 403.
45. Ibid., 397.
46. Ibid., 395.
47. Ibid., 398.
48. The treaty terms are in The New American State Papers: Indian Affairs, edited by Thomas C. Cochran, IV, (Wilmington, Del., 1972), 150-152, followed by the minutes of the treaty conference.

712-04-04

Comment on Mathur and Jennings

by

Barbara Graymont

After the Revolutionary War, when the Iroquois entered upon the reservation period and saw their once vast domain taken up by White settlers and their old way of life restricted, they went into a precipitate economic and social decline. Out of this demoralization arose a man named Handsome Lake who became prophet of the Good Word, the new preaching to revive the Iroquois people. In one of his visions he was taken to the upper regions until he came to a spot "Midway between the earth and the clouds." There he saw a man walking and rejoicing. This was a White man. And the heavenly messengers explained to Handsome Lake: "Truly you have seen. It is said that the man is the first and oldest president of the United States. Now he enjoys himself and he is the only white man so near the new world of our Creator." And the messengers further explained that George Washington achieved this blessed place by his just treatment of the Iroquois after the Revolution, because he allowed them to return to their homes in peace after their British allies had abandoned them to the mercies of their American enemies. And, concluded the messengers, "this man did a great work."<sup>1</sup> So we have the tradition of George Washington that is passed down in the Iroquois Longhouse religion to this day.

White historians throughout the years have viewed Washington from a somewhat different perspective--respectful, but still critical. Critical assessments of the Founding Fathers are not a recent innovation of the last ten years or so. Fourth of July oratory and history are not necessarily the same thing. Ever since the passing of Mason Weems and George Bancroft, several generations of professional historians have been taking a critical look at the Founding Fathers. And not only professional historians. The popular writer and novelist Rupert Hughes published the first volume of his famous debunking biography of George Washington in 1926--scarcely a recent date. The book caused a sensation among general readers when it appeared, and a delegation of concerned citizens called upon President Calvin Coolidge for his assistance in repairing the damaged reputation of the First President. Coolidge heard them out and then, with a wave of his hand in the direction of the Washington monument, remarked in his laconic New England style, "His monument still stands."

Any serious historian recognizes the statesmen of the early Republic to have been human beings with human frailties, but nonetheless men whose achievements were important and whose contributions in the formation of the Republic were essential. The same rigorous standards of historical scholarship that we have applied to writing about the founders of the American Republic we must also apply in the future in writing about Indian heroes and the Indian Founding Fathers as a maturing Indian history develops. Occasionally, as in the case of Red Jacket, we shall discover feet of clay. But this discovery will not negate his positive achievements as an Indian leader nor obscure his individual talents and genius.

While Leopold von Ranke's dictum of showing wie es eigentlich gewesen--"how it really was"--may be a largely unattainable ideal, the historian should strive toward the greatest accuracy possible. We realize, sadly, that much that happened in the past has been irretrievably lost, and therefore we cannot report what we do not have. For this reason alone, it would be impossible simply to show "how it really was" with total fullness. But also, no matter how objective historians may be, they inevitably write from a certain viewpoint or bias, depending on their training, their personal background, the age in which they live, and their own empathy or lack of it with the subject matter. History is not only a matter of reporting facts; it also involves interpreting them. And it is in the interpreting that we get a new perspective on history, but nevertheless a perspective filtered through the eyes of the particular historian.

Let me pick out just a few points from this paper on Hendrick for comment. Hendrick was a remarkable leader and a person of unquestioned ability. The Mohawks certainly did play a role in keeping New York English, to the extent that their loyalty earned them the grateful title of "the faithful Mohawks." But we must not give the greatest emphasis in this achievement to the battle of Crown Point alone. There were other important battles. Crown Point was the first important English victory, but the Battle of Quebec was the decisive one. Hendrick by that time was long gone. And other Indians, many unnamed in history, assisted the English.

Professor Mathur is right in delineating Hendrick as a hero, but I rather think she has claimed too much for him in the wrong area. There is no real evidence that he was responsible for setting Franklin's Albany Plan of Union in motion. Nor is there any real evidence that Franklin drew upon the model of the Iroquois Confederacy for his plan. The evidence presented by Professor Mathur is unconvincing when one carefully compares the Albany Plan with the structure of the Six Nations Confederacy. The fact that Franklin wanted a copy of an Indian conference proves nothing. He printed Indian treaties and was obviously interested in Indian relations, but we can read through dozens of reports of Indian conferences and find in them just the negotiations without revelation of the structure of the Confederacy. Franklin actually did not understand the Iroquois Confederacy. He was using the argument of the unity of Indians as a debater's point to rally Whites to unite also. "If six nations of ignorant savages can get together, why can't we civilized people do the same thing," he was stating in effect. But he did not copy the Confederacy. The Iroquois Confederacy was a kinship state, based on the family and the clan. Such a notion was alien to Franklin and to the Whites in general, who knew of nothing save the political state based upon geographical representation. Nor was the concept of a hereditary chieftainship or chieftainships in any way acceptable to White Americans at that time or at any other time. Americans tolerated a hereditary nobility far away in England, but would not do so in the colonies--not even a deposible hereditary nobility. What Franklin was asking for the colonies was dominion status within the British Empire--a concept far too advanced for its time to meet acceptance by either the British government or the individual colonies.

Nor does the author present any solid evidence that Americans got their notions of democracy from the Indians. There is no source cited for Felix Cohen's supposed statement that he saw documents of British spies stating that Indians were teaching Americans by their example to be democratic. I myself could not find any such reference in Cohen's Handbook of Federal Indian Law.<sup>2</sup> Cohen was too good a lawyer not to know that hearsay is not acceptable in a court of law. In reading through the Sir William Johnson Papers, however, in the era just prior to the Revolution, I find several references of Johnson's to the turmoil and rebelliousness in the colonies, blaming it not on the influence of Indian ideas, but on "the republican turn of their Charters" and the "Independent Gentry" who had "always been remarkable for opposing Government in every Article, and its Officers in every Character, and have propagated their Republican principles amongst an Ignorant People, whose Religious and Civil tenets incline them to embrace that Doctrine."<sup>3</sup>

Just a note on sources. The author has used some excellent source material, including published primary sources. Some of the material has been used uncritically, however. I should especially like to caution against the use of Augustus Buell's biography of William Johnson, which contains so much fiction as to make it practically useless. Unfortunately, subsequent writers have used Buell and passed on his errors. Milton W. Hamilton, in two critical articles, has examined Buell's scholarship and found it wanting.<sup>4</sup>

That Sir William Johnson had 300 Mohawk children is highly doubtful. As Professor Mathur states, the Mohawks were a small tribe. There just were not that many unattached Mohawk women available to accommodate Sir William. Also, the Mohawks, during Johnson's years with them, knew no such population explosion. Again, I would caution against accepting Buell's unfounded statements.

We do not have to justify the Iroquois Confederacy by trying to make it the parent of the United States government. The old League of the Extended Lodge had its own glory, and its glory was itself. Its glory was in the genius of its founders, who took five warring tribes and welded them into a confederacy of brotherhood, based on the family and the clan. It was a league of kinship. This was its strength. Without jails and police to enforce its laws, it survived and became a power to be reckoned with. Underneath the branches of its Tree of Peace was room for more who wished to come in under its protection and become braces to the Lodge. It welded together a people, so that they proudly endure today, even though the League is now weak and many have departed from under its branches. But it gave its people an identity that can never be taken away from them--an identity that endures down to this day. Its monument still stands.

Finally, a note on scalping. I think it is time for a modern historian to investigate the origins of scalping in the New World. In 1906 the German scholar Friederici wrote a comprehensive study which has been standard, but since it is in German and of an old date it is generally unavailable to most readers.<sup>5</sup> According to the best evidence available, scalping was originally practiced by some Eastern woodlands tribes, was picked up by Whites and taken west by them and introduced among tribes that had never practiced it. Indians today, however, persist in wanting to blame the whole thing on Whites. Mooney, in his article on scalping in the old Hodge Handbook of

American Indians states that "The practice is not exclusively an Indian one, having been noted among the ancient Scythians as far back as the time of Herodotus."<sup>6</sup> This has been picked up as a caption in the new National Geographic book, The World of the American Indian in the sentence: "Scalping, known in the Old World since the time of Herodotus, was far from universal among Indians."<sup>7</sup> I may point out that scalping was totally unknown among those Western European immigrants who came to the New World. The Scythians were an ancient people who lived north of the Black Sea in ancient times and later disappeared into the oblivion of history. By the time of Western European migration to the Americas, they and their habits had long since been forgotten, and Herodotus was read only by the highly literate and well-educated gentlemen. Scalping was never a part of Western European tradition. This is why it so shocked the Europeans who first encountered it; but, paradoxically, they took to it quite well. Cutting off heads of enemies was known to both Red and White races, although the Europeans restricted this punishment generally for rebels within their midst whereas Indians used it against enemies defeated in war. But when Whites took up the practice of scalping, or encouraged it among Indians by offering scalp bounties, they were ignorant of the religious and magical significance that it had for the tribes that practiced it. To the Whites it was only a trophy. To Indians it was more. It was the part replacing the whole, a symbol of achievement in war, but also a symbol that the enemy's power was now in the village and was a captive part of the tribe who had overcome him. Enemies were often adopted in place of dead relatives. In other cases, the scalp served as substitute for the dead relative in that a life had been given for a life, or a part of the enemy had replaced the loved one who had been lost. A difficult concept for a modern to understand, perhaps, but very logical to the Indian of that time. We must look at the past not only through the eyes of the present and from the standpoint of our own culture, but from the standpoint of the times we are investigating, and try to place ourselves inside the feelings of the people we are writing about. I submit that the reason for so much recent intensity on the part of Indian writers to blame the origin of scalping on Whites is an indication of how much they have been assimilated to White ways of thinking. An anthropologist does not moralize about a culture, but rather examines, describes, and explains it. This should also be the method of the historian.

"The shot heard 'round the world" that began the Revolution also marked a revolution in men's thinking and actions. Here was the first colonial country to have a successful revolution and set up an enduring government that became an inspiration for other peoples in the world struggling for freedom. But as Professor Jennings so pointedly states, the White leaders of that inspiring revolt had a sense of liberty that was severely limited. Only to a very small extent did it include Blacks. Indians, who had their own sovereign territories and governments, were considered obstacles to White progress after the Revolution. Even those who aided the Patriots in the Revolution were soon swept aside by the onrushing tide of White settlers. Freedom and liberty were indeed conceived in Euramerican terms, to use Professor Jennings's phrase. What Professors Jennings and Mathur are both doing is asking the present generation to accept

the humanity, the aspirations, and the achievements of the non-Whites, who were a part of the Revolution, on a par with those of the Whites. Indians, too, are heroes; Indians, too, are people; Indians, too, are important to history.

I would very much disagree with Professor Jennings's characterization of the American Revolution as a barons' revolt, similar to the barons' revolts of medieval continental Europe or of 1215 in England. The situation in America was quite different. There was only a vestige of feudalism, perhaps best represented in the great estates in New York and feudal practices such as primogeniture and quitrents in some colonies. But there was a general freehold tenure in most colonies, and even where quitrents were imposed they were often stoutly resisted as in Pennsylvania. Also, in the proprietary colonies, there developed politically a proprietary party and a representative party opposed to the proprietor. American conditions were creating new and more democratic forms of government and society. The conditions of the New World then made the American way of life incompatible with the English way although, even in Revolution, the former could never divorce itself entirely from the latter. Also, we must not overlook the role of the street mob in the years prior to the Revolution, as in the Boston Massacre and the Stamp Act riots. This is hardly characteristic of a barons' revolt, carried on only by the elite.

Professor Jennings has made two points that I should like to emphasize. He has said about the status of the Indian tribes, "As the Crown's officers viewed this status, it was that of semi-autonomous segments of the empire, presided over by vice-regents called superintendents. As the Indians regarded it, however, the tribes were free 'nations' who dealt with their great British ally through his ambassadors." This shows the difference in perspective of the two peoples, and emphasizes also the Indians' viewpoint that they were an independent people who had the same rights and dignities that their European neighbors had. In writing an Indian history, we must put ourselves into the Indian way of looking at the situation. This has all too often been neglected. And it is difficult, also, for most of the documentary sources that survive were written by Whites from a White perspective.

Secondly, he asks, "Did the crown have a sovereign right to territories it had never conquered or governed merely because the inhabitants of those lands were pagans who had government in the tribal form rather than the state form?" This is the question Roger Williams also asked. What right did the King of England have to give away land that did not belong to him? The answer of the enraged Massachusetts Bay leaders was, of course, that they had bought from the Indians every square foot of land they occupied. True enough, but the answer does not get to the root of the question. The theory behind European expansion reveals an attitude of disregard for non-Europeans tribal peoples who were not powerful enough to ward off the Europeans. It is an attitude that has remained to our present day, when successive American governments have refused to recognize the validity of the Indian way of life and Indian government, and have continually sought to make a White man out of the Indian by Allotment Acts and successive forceful measures to integrate the Red race into the free-enterprise economy.



The paper by Professor Jennings presents an important new look at Indian-White relations prior to the Revolution, and helps us to understand what was developing and why things took the direction they did afterwards.

After the Seven Years War, Great Britain was developing the intricate machinery for governing a far-flung empire. There had to be something for everyone in this empire: for English seaboard colonies, for the French in the Ohio and Quebec regions, and for the Indians. The French and Indians were to be the gainers by this new imperial policy, and the seaboard colonies, at least in their own eyes, were the losers. The latter's territories, and hence their sovereignties, were henceforth to be restricted. Who could tell where it would end?

The Quebec Act was a very liberal and a very wise piece of legislation. Its intent was totally distorted by the seaboard colonies and often lumped with the Intolerable Acts. The trouble was that Great Britain had an indigestible empire. Its constituent parts were incompatible.

I think that we can see by what has been set before us that the British imperial policy, as it was developing, was protective of Indian rights and Indian lands. The victory of the Americans in the Revolution removed that protection and the Americans immediately began embarking on a new type of imperialism--one that was not a conservator of natural resources nor a protector of a technologically weaker people, but an exploiter of natural resources and weaker peoples alike.

The American Revolution would be the inspirer of other colonial peoples yearning to be free and throw off the shackles of oppression. But, paradoxically, the Revolution also opened up avenues to new oppression as the Americans, untroubled by and unskilled at running an empire, used their newly won liberty to absorb the whole western territory and turn it into a White man's land. The Americans did not look upon their newly won lands as an empire in need of imperial administration, but as a potential extension of the older settlements--virgin land to be tamed for the White man's benefit. The century-old seaboard practice of increasing dense settlement and pushing back the Indians was thus continued. And it was the winning of the Revolution that made it possible.

This paper, then, offers a challenging approach--a new examination of the imperial government and the struggle between Whitehall and the colonials for mastery in the New World. In the middle stood the Indian, struggling also for mastery--but mastery only over what was his. It was indeed a tripartite struggle in which the American Revolution assured that there could in the long run be only one victor.

### Notes

1. Arthur C. Parker, The Code of Handsome Lake, the Seneca Prophet (1913), reprinted in Parker on the Iroquois, ed. William N. Fenton (Syracuse, NY, 1968), p. 66.
2. Felix S. Cohen, Handbook of Federal Indian Law, with Reference Tables and Index (Washington, DC, 1942).
3. The Papers of Sir William Johnson, eds. James Sullivan, et al., 14 vols. (Albany,, 1921-1965), VIII, 1059-61, 1114-15, 1160-61; IV, 841-44, 856, 860-61; XI, 930-31.
4. Milton W. Hamilton, "August C. Buell, Fraudulent Historian," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 80 (1956); "Sir William Johnson's Wives," New York History, January 1957.
5. Georg Friederici, Skalpieren und ähnliche Kriegsgebräuche in Amerika (Braunschweig, 1906).
6. James Mooney, "Scalping," in Handbook of American Indians North of Mexico, 2 vols. (Washington, DC, 1907-1910), II, 482.
7. The World of the American Indian (Washington, DC, 1974), p. 337.
8. Editor's note: Since Professor Graymont wrote these comments, two articles have appeared on scalping written by James Axtell: "The Unkindest Cut, or Who Invented Scalpling?" and "Scalping: The Ethnohistory of a Moral Question." These are conveniently reprinted in James Axtell, The European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

712-142-04

The Unbroken Twig:  
The Revolution in Indian Education

by

James Axtell

Revolutions are usually (and rightly) seen as political and military affairs, but the precedent of an almost 175-year-old contest demands that the American Revolution also be viewed as an educational struggle. From the earliest European settlements in North America, the competition for empire was primarily--in chronology and strategy--an educational contest for the loyalty and allegiance of the numbers of the competing cultures--English, French, and Indian--and therefore a moral contest between competing cultural styles.<sup>1</sup> Even when the British supplanted the French in Canada and the American colonists sought their independence, the character of the contest, especially for the Indians, remained essentially unchanged.<sup>2</sup>

From an educational perspective the history of the European invasion of North America takes on a somewhat novel configuration. While they eventually defeated the French for the political hegemony of the continent, the English had little success in converting the Indians to Christianity and civilization, one of their principal goals of colonization. Not only were they slow to begin, but the Protestant missionaries--few in number, largely ignorant of Indian language and culture, and too bound to their congregations to acquire them--too often lost the race for Indian souls to disease, war, alcohol, and despair.<sup>3</sup> And even though they encountered the numerically weakened and politically disunited tribes of the Atlantic seaboard, their countrymen's insatiable appetite for land quickly raised and confirmed the Indian's suspicions about the purity of Christian motives. As Samuel Sewall prophetically observed in 1700, "it will be a vain attempt to offer Heaven to them, if they take up prejudices against us, as if we did grudge them a Living upon their own Earth."<sup>4</sup>

The tenacity of Indian cultural habits was the greatest obstacle to the success of the European efforts, but the English--Puritan and Anglican alike--compounded their problems by confronting those habits head-on with an equally obdurate philosophy of conversion. Although the Indians were felt to be educable, their savage condition was not felt to be fertile ground for the holy seeds of Christianity. Consequently, "the most sensible Writers on this Subject" felt that it was necessary to "civilize Savages before they can be converted to Christianity; & that in order to make them Christians, they must first be made men" in the image of their English teachers.<sup>5</sup>

The task the English had set themselves was, of course, a cultural impossibility, but nearly two centuries of failure did not amend their methods or their goals one whit. Nor did the northern example of their Catholic rivals, the Jesuits, who by the 1670s had shed their continental "civilize-first" philosophy for a more realistic approach formed in the field and had gone on to modest successes among some of the most powerful tribes of New France.<sup>6</sup> Even Sir William Johnson, the British superintendent of Indian affairs and a loyal Anglican,

"always considered the [abilities, Application, &] conduct of the Jesuits...to be worthy of our Imitation." "The Ind[ia]ns of Canada were made Christians but not Civilized according to our general Acceptance of the Word," he counselled the Anglican Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, "Yet they were as orderly a people as any of our Lower Class are. The french Considered Hunting as [the Indians'] Trade, in which they were More usefull to the Community & happier in themselves than they co[ul]d have been in any other profession." In short, Johnson argues, "a Civilized Member of Society & an Indian Hunter are not incompatible Characters," a point of view his countrymen seldom considered.

Considering the populations, political power, wealth, intellectual heritage, religious zeal, and technological attractiveness of the European rivals in the New World, their relative lack of success in converting the Indians to their ways of life is surprising. But even more surprising is the seemingly easy success the Indians enjoyed in converting "thousands" of civilized Europeans to a "savage" way of life. In 1753, even before the Indians achieved their greatest success on the frontiers of Pennsylvania and Virginia, Benjamin Franklin wondered how it was that "when an Indian Child has been brought up among us, taught our language and habituated to our Customs, yet if he goes to see his relations and make one Indian Ramble with them, there is no persuading him ever to return. [But] when white persons of either sex have been taken prisoners young by the Indians, and lived a while among them, tho' ransomed by their Friends, and treated with all imaginable tenderness to prevail with them to stay among the English, yet in a Short time they become disgusted with our manner of life, and the care and pains that are necessary to support it, and take the first good Opportunity of escaping again into the Woods, from whence there is no reclaiming them."

Like the Europeans who tried to send Indian children to school to learn civilized ways, the Indians predominantly chose young Europeans to be the captive recipients of their unique process of education. After adopting them into their own families in the place of dead relatives, with full rights, honors, and responsibilities, the Indians proceeded to love, trust, and nourish the captives as if they had been born of Indian mothers. No mobility, social or physical, was denied them. They were free to marry the persons of their choice and to hold the highest offices of the nation if they qualified by kinship and competence (as many did). By taking the captives to their cultural heart, by weaving them into the personal and social fabric of their lives, the Indians outstripped their more powerful rivals in the contest of conversion by stripping them of a goodly portion of their posterity.

While the American Revolution did not alter the general configuration of this older educational contest, it did introduce several nuances and shifts of emphasis. The first change was the gradual--if temporary--reduction of the number of missionaries in the American field.<sup>10</sup> The London-based New England Company and the S.P.G. shifted their efforts to British Canada, and the Scottish Society withdrew altogether, leaving only the assiduous Moravians in Ohio and Pennsylvania and a dozen other Protestants in New England and New York. This temporary relief from the officious attentions of White missionaries raises some interesting questions: Among the tribes that

were thus freed, was there a resurgence of nativism? Did their resistance to White encroachment increase? Did the newly dominant traditional factions lord it over the now bereft Christian factions?

The experience of the Moravians in the Ohio Valley indicates that this is just what happened to their Delaware and Mahican converts when the Wyandots, Shawnees, and Delawares took up the hatchet against the American "Long Knives." Before the war the Delawares were divided in their response to Christianity, but the council allowed the Moravian missions to proceed unmolested because of their blameless conduct. In February 1775 the leading chiefs, Netawatwees and White Eyes, "with their council...professed, in the name of their entire nation, that they are willing to accept the Christian faith and, although many Indians are still against it," wrote David Zeisberger, "in fact, hostile to it, yet by this measure they will be silenced and they can no longer rise against us openly."<sup>11</sup> A year later, when Zeisberger visited Netawatees at Coshocton, the Delaware capital, he was pleasantly surprised to notice "a different atmosphere." "A different spirit rules among the Indians," he reported. "We have seen many who, in times past, were our bitter enemies and would neither hear nor know anything of God's Word and who now show themselves very obliging and confiding toward us, cultivating our companionship as long as we were with them."<sup>12</sup>

By the spring of 1777, however, the era of good feelings had passed. Several of the Delaware chiefs wanted to protect the three Moravian towns, but knew they were powerless against hostile Indian allies who expected the traditional hospitality from their Christian brethren. When Indian war parties heading for the American settlements began to pass through Schoenbrunn, the town farthest from Delaware protection, the truncation of the Christian experiment on the Muskingum was imminent. "All sorts of good-for-nothing rabble are assembling here," wrote Zeisberger, "and are rejoicing at our secession." A week later "the [Indian] brethren and sisters declared that now they could no longer stand it here, in that things were going on here worse than in other pagan towns. They believed that these people did it only to tire us out so that we soon would go and they could take possession of our houses."<sup>13</sup> On 19 April the missionaries pulled down the meetinghouse and two days later the whole town left for Gnadenhütten downriver, where they were to suffer similar harassment until 1778 when they were forced to move again. With the dust of war traditional factions choked the voices of successful missionaries and stopped the ears of potential converts.

Nor was this all. Converts lapsed into heathen habits when powerful threats to their new way of life appeared or when their teachers were taken from them. In March 1777, for example, "a part of the Munsee" who lived at Schoenbrunn "declared that they wished to have no part" in what the Moravians were then facing. "They said briefly in one word: 'We are through believing.'"<sup>14</sup> Again, when a large Indian war party came to Gnadenhütten to persuade the Christians to move to Sandusky for protection, the prolonged example of "warriors and rough, wild men" caused many converts to resume "the old heathenish customs and usages." "They waxed wicked and stubborn," lamented their teacher. "Yes, it went so far that some wicked people spoke and gave us to understand that while there was now war, they could prescribe us rules...."<sup>15</sup>

When the Moravian ministers were captured and taken to Detroit by the British in 1781, traditional Indian leaders were tireless in their efforts to move the converts deeper into Indian country and to separate them from each other, a strategy their teachers feared would result in their being "mingled and lost among the Indians."<sup>16</sup> It was a fear well justified, for long after the missionaries and several of their converts had established a new Gnadenhütten on the Clinton River in Michigan, rumors were still circulating in Indian country to dissuade former brethren from joining them. "It makes us sad to see how they have quite fallen away from the Saviour, and again become heathen as soon as their teachers were taken from them," Zeisberger wrote. "None is subject to another, nor does one give heed to another, but each one is for himself, and there is no fellow-feeling among them. Each one considers himself shrewd, and accepts no advice from others." Indian individualism was suffocating Christian communalism and there was nothing the war-weary missionaries could do to prevent it.

Another reason for the converts' recidivism was a deep-seated resentment of White authority that must have lain just beneath the surface of many Christian converts, a resentment that found expression when the social and political dislocations of war compromised the missionaries' position. On their first visit to Schoenbrunn in 1781, the Wyandot war party soon discovered, in Zeisberger's words, that "our Indians were not of one mind...There were faithless, wretched men among us, who gave them information, and proposed schemes to them for reaching their ends. They gave them plainly to understand, that if they would only take us white brethren prisoners away with them, then the Indians would all follow them. To our pain and mortification, we had to hear and see this on the part of our own people, and be silent about it...."<sup>17</sup> In subsequent months the missionaries were doubly convinced that the troubles of their church had been brought on by these stubborn sinners, who "had as good as betrayed and sold their teachers, in order to show us we had no power to punish them for their sinful lives, as if they wished to show us that our life and position depended upon them."<sup>18</sup> Of all the Indians' characteristics, their pride must have been the hardest to squeeze into the Christian mold of humility. Even the gentle Moravians discovered that if they admonished them for their "bad conduct and faults," their oldest and steadiest converts no less than their newest "take it very loftily, and often cannot bear it."<sup>19</sup>

The Christian converts were not the only Indian groups torn by revolutionary factionalism. Traditional native groups, too, found their inherent divisiveness exacerbated, first by the conversion of leading men and women, and then by the treatment of the Christians. More than one Delaware chief relinquished his office and seat on the council when he was baptized into the faith. Presumably this led to pagan ascendancy in the tribe, thereby strengthening the native resistance to the whites. One exception to this pattern was the conversion of Petrus Echpalawehund, who was allowed to live with the Moravians at Schoenbrunn as long as he retained his place on the council.<sup>20</sup>

Factionalism was endemic to Indian societies, just as it was to White, but long after the Moravians and their converts had been moved from their homes on the Muskingum by the Wyandots and Captain Pipe's Delawares, the Ohio Valley tribes were disturbed by blame and guilt.<sup>21</sup>

In October 1781 word came to the Christians in their unproductive Captive's Town on the Upper Sandusky that "the Shawanese were much displeased with the Delawares and Wyandots, that they had brought us away from our towns and placed us in such want, when we, where we used to be, not only would have had every thing in abundance, but could have given also to others who were in need; they had always comforted themselves with the thought, that ...we were the only hope of all the Indians,...but now they had no more hope left; they, the Wyandots and Delawares, were thus the cause of ruin of so many Indians."<sup>22</sup> A year later Zeisberger noted that "the Delaware chiefs are still wrangling, one with another, about us, asking who is the cause that your Indian church has been so badly treated and ruined." They were still wrangling the following year and two years after that. "Thus it goes among the Indians," sighed the missionary, "some are for and others against a thing."<sup>23</sup>

And yet, while intensified tribal factionalism sentenced the missions to innumerable hardships, it was probably also responsible for their ultimate survival. For by 1782 it was clear to the Moravians that the Ohio Wyandots "would like to extirpate us and our Indians, had they nothing to fear afterward from other nations." But characteristically the Wyandots, a weak band of less than a hundred warriors, also feared the unseen vengeance of their victims. In a superb description of guilt projection, Zeisberger observed that "since they are angry with us, they are fearful about us, for their conscience accuses them of having treated us so ill, and they fear that our Indians will take revenge on them, and make them some return for what they have done to us."<sup>24</sup> Their fears were probably unfounded, considering the pacific philosophy of the converts, but they were indicative of the far-reaching changes wrought upon Indian society by the ongoing educational contest for the continent.

The Indians were not the only competitors caught in the social backwash of the Revolution. Before the Treaty of Paris, which transferred Canada to the British in 1763, the hostile tribes of the western and northern country were largely allied with the French. When the Indians did not wish to adopt their English captives, they sold them to their French allies, often for a healthy gift in money or goods. Although the French were occasionally reimbursed by the relatives of the captives or their colonial governments when moments of peace provided for the return of prisoners of war, more often their generosity was motivated by simple humanity and a wish to save fellow Christians from the "savage" embrace.<sup>25</sup>

But being strong competitors, the Canadians also made a determined effort to convert the English to Catholicism and French citizenship. If the long lists of naturalized and baptized "Anglais" in the French records are any indication, they succeeded admirably. Between 1689 and 1713, for instance, the years of the heaviest Indian depredations along the northern and eastern frontiers of New England, some 25% of the 600 English captives elected to remain in Canada and to assume the Catholic faith. Even the Indians could not claim a better record.<sup>26</sup>

By the Revolution, however, the British had supplanted the French as the Indians' allies in the enemy lines.<sup>27</sup> But unlike the French, whose leaders had considered themselves civilized gentlemen dutifully engaged in an essentially European war, the British had greater cause

for vindictiveness toward their opponents--family quarrels always cut deepest.<sup>28</sup> Just having spent countless lives and a considerable fortune winning that enormous continental prize, they were not about to allow an upstart pack of rebellious children to usurp their place. If in fact the British exercised a greater degree of vengeance than had their French predecessors, a number of questions occur: Did the American captives who chose to become Indians or French Catholics before the Revolution return to American society in larger numbers later because of their treatment in captivity? To put it another way, did colonists "go native" or apostatize before the Revolution for the same reasons that many of their neighbors later turned to rebellion? By the same token, did Tory or British captives of the American-allied Indians return to British lines as soon as possible? In general, how did the ideological coloration of the revolutionary groups affect their cultural responses to captivity?

It is well known that Indian war parties were often accompanied, led, or supplied by British regulars and Tory rangers. What we do not yet know is how the British presence affected the educational character of the Indian villages after the return of the war parties. Did British vindictiveness, for example, rub off on the Indians, who under other circumstances would have tried to assimilate the captives? Surely in some instances it did. Normally, adult male prisoners, especially soldiers, were handed over to the British at Detroit or Niagara for forwarding to Canadian<sup>29</sup> confinement, just as they had been during the French and Indian wars. For the Indians were simply not very interested in them as potential converts, knowing that their advanced age and degree of enculturation rendered them reluctant proselytes at best.<sup>30</sup> But when the captives were known to have killed Indian noncombatants, for example, no torture was withheld and no mercy given, as many learned to their grief in January 1783. For their part in the senseless massacre of 90 unarmed Moravian Indians at Gnadenhütten the previous year, "many white people from the States, who [had] been taken prisoners, [were] tortured and burnt alive in Sandusky and among the Shawanese...As soon as it [was] known that any prisoner had part in that affair, he [was] forthwith bound, tortured, and burnt."<sup>31</sup> Since these tribes were under the influence of the "famous trio" of British agents, Girty, Elliott, and McKee, it is possible that Indian outrage was fueled by British timber.<sup>32</sup>

But this is largely conjecture. Moreover it slights, to the point of ignoring, an important axiom of the history of Indian-White relations, namely, that we should assume that the Indians, fully as much as the Whites, acted for their own purposes at all times. If they appear to have done the bidding of the British in the Revolution, we must not forget that in reality they acted as they did for reasons of their own and those reasons form the only valid context of explanation for their actions.<sup>33</sup> Consequently, if we keep in mind the long history of Indian education as we read the accounts of revolutionary captivity, we will be less likely to overestimate the extent of British influence among the allied tribes.

The first suggestion that the Indians kept their own counsel comes from the Moravians who saw on the Lower Sandusky "many white prisoners from the Americans among the Wyandots, who do not give up their prisoners to the English.<sup>34</sup> They prefer, keeping them, to strengthen their own nation." Since this had been an Indian



practice before the White man came to America, the presence of the Whites and their "family quarrel" apparently had little effect upon the Wyandots' educational strategy.

To judge from revolutionary captivity narratives, they made equally little difference to several other tribes. The Iroquois obviously had more on their minds than British vengeance when they captured farmer Luke Swetland from Wyoming in 1778 and adopted him as a grandson to an old woman. Although he was taken through a Tory camp on the way to New York, Swetland could only say after his year in captivity that "the Indians were remarkably kind to me."<sup>35</sup> Frances Slocum, taken at the age of five from the same place by the Delawares, testified--perhaps redundantly after a lifetime as an Indian--that she too was "always treated well and kindly."<sup>36</sup> And there were many more who exchanged their American lives for Indian ways. "White Indians" were a familiar sight in Indian villages during the Revolution, and had long been.

Yet there was one distinctly new element introduced into Indian life by the Revolution, an element that may have had a considerable and unpredictable impact. Crèvecoeur tells us that many Middle Atlantic frontier Tories whose estates had been confiscated "took refuge among the Indians," as did "many others" who were simply "tired of that perpetual tumult" in which the settlements were caught. "This uncommon emigration," he wrote, "...has thrown among them a greater number of whites than ever has been known before."<sup>37</sup> We would obviously like to know what impact these numerous white men had on Indian life. Did they, for instance, teach the Indians any new techniques of farming or technology? Initially, at least, their lack of equipment, live-stock, and supplies seems to have created more problems than it solved. The Indians, it was said, "had been so much disturbed in their huntings that they were not able to maintain so many of them." Out of desperation the Indians went to the sequestered estates in search of cows and horses to enable their guests to "raise their own bread" on land that the Indians, from their strong sense of hospitality, had given them.<sup>38</sup>

But other questions occur: Did they ever return to White society? Or did they, as Crèvecoeur asked, "cherish their knowledge and industry and gather themselves on some fertile spot in the interior parts of the continent?" Since they were adult men with families, were they less susceptible to Indian education? Or did the "easy, desultory life so peculiar to the Indians" breed in them a permanent aversion to "the yoke of European society?" From his knowledge on Indian-White relations in America, Crèvecoeur predicted that the latter course would "preponderate."<sup>39</sup> Indeed when he himself entertained the idea of seeking refuge in an Indian village (at least for the sake of his European readers), his main fear was that "the perceptible charm of Indian education, may seize my younger children, and give them such a propensity to that mode of life, as may preclude their returning to the manners and customs of their parents." If they could keep themselves "busy in tilling the earth," he hoped there would be "no fear of any of us becoming wild; it is the chase and the food it procures, that have this strange effect."<sup>40</sup> In spite of his cautious hopes, however, Crèvecoeur realized that "this uncommon emigration...will ere long give rise to a new set of people, but will

not produce a new species,--so strong is the power of Indian education."<sup>41</sup>

There can be no doubt that the Revolution wrought incalculable damage to native American life. From a military and political standpoint the Indians were the biggest losers in what was supposed to be a White family affair. But from another perspective the Revolution was only a brief skirmish in the long educational war that the Indians had waged with the Whites from the very beginning of European colonization. And in that encounter the Indians had never known defeat.

## Notes

1. My idea of culture is based upon the assumption that "the world of men is made up in the first place of ideas and ideals," or ethos. A culture is at bottom the internalized hierarchy of values that the members of a society hold in common. Ethos, therefore, "is a conception in which the normative aspect of human experience is in advance given priority...to give order to the whole." Robert Redfield, The Little Community (Chicago, 1960), 30, 86. I also agree with Scott Momaday that "more important than the tangible history of white-Indian relations...is the interaction and attitudes which inform that relationship and transcend it. Those ideas and attitudes are, on both sides, matters of morale and morality." "The Morality of Indian-Hating," Ramparts 3 (1964-65), 30-31.
2. I am presently at work on a book entitled The Invasion Within: The Contest of Cultures in Colonial North America which will explore the attempts of the English, French, and Indian peoples to convert each other.
3. John Halkett, Historical Notes Respecting the Indians of North America: With Remarks on the Attempts Made to Convert and Civilize Them (London, 1825); William Kellaway, The New England Company, 1649-1776 (London, 1961); Francis Jennings, "Goals and Functions of Puritan Missions to the Indians," Ethnohistory 18 (1971), 197-212; Neal Salisbury, "Red Puritans: The 'Praying Indians' of Massachusetts Bay and John Eliot," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 31 (1974), 27-54; The Papers of Sir William Johnson (Albany, 1921-65), V, 388-90, 438-41, 528-32; VII, 596-602. For a comparison of Puritan and Jesuit advantages and disadvantages, see James Axtell, "The European Failure to Convert the Indians: An Autopsy," Papers of the Sixth Algonquian Conference, 1974, ed. William Cowan, National Museum of Man, Mercury Series, Canadian Ethnology Service, Paper No. 23 (Ottawa, 1975), 274-290.
4. Letter-Book of Samuel Sewall, Sewall to Sir William Ashurst, 3 May 1700, in Collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 6th ser., vol. 1 (1886), 233. For land grievances that hampered the effectiveness of New England missions, see Kellaway, The New England Company, 85-87, 216-217, 223, 251, 259.
5. The Papers of Sir William Johnson, VII, 506.
6. Jean Delanglez, S.J., Frontenac and the Jesuits (Chicago, 1939), pp. 35-65; George F. G. Stanley, "The Policy of 'Francisation' as Applied to the Indians during the Ancien Regime," Revue d'Histoire de l'Amerique Francaise 3 (December 1949), 333-48.
7. The Papers of Sir William Johnson, V, 530; VII, 598-600. See Gerald J. Goodwin, "Christianity, Civilization and the Savage: The Anglican Mission to the American Indians," Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church 42 (June, 1973), 93-110, for a not altogether convincing argument that most Anglicans agreed with Johnson's "Christianize-first" philosophy until the 1760s, when they abruptly shifted to the "civilize-first" position.

8. James Axtell, "The Scholastic Philosophy of the Wilderness," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 29 (1972), 335-366, and "The White Indians of Colonial America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 32 (1975), 55-88.
9. Leonard W. Labaree et al., eds., The Papers of Benjamin Franklin (New Haven, 1959--), IV, 481-82, 9 May 1753.
10. The reduction was only temporary because as soon as the war ended the missionary field was flooded with Protestant groups: The Society for Propagating the Gospel among the Indians and Others in North America (1787), the Society of the United Brethren for Propagating the Gospel among the Heathen (1787), the New York (1796), Northern (1797), Connecticut (1798), Massachusetts (1799), and the Western Missionary Societies (1802). Robert Berkhofer, Jr., Salvation and the Savage; An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862 (Lexington, Ky., 1965; New York, 1972), p. 3.
11. Schoenbrunn Story: Excerpts from the Diary of the Reverend David Zeisberger, 1772-1777, at Schoenbrunn in the Ohio Country, transl. August C. Mahr, ed., Daniel R. Porter III (Columbus, Ohio, 1972), 15, 28 February 1775.
12. Ibid., 19, 11 February 1776.
13. Ibid., 23, 3 and 10 April 1777.
14. Ibid., 22, 24 March 1777.
15. Diary of David Zeisberger, transl. and ed. Eugene F. Bliss (Cincinnati, 1885), I, 7, August 1781.
16. Ibid., I, 76, 21 March 1782.
17. Ibid., I, 8, 20 August 1781. See also I, 66, 6 February, 1782.
18. Ibid., I, 84, 2 April 1782.
19. Ibid., I, 230, 8 June 1785.
20. Paul Wallace, Thirty Thousand Miles with John Heckewelder (Pittsburgh, 1958), pp. 103, 198; Diary of David Zeisberger, ed. Bliss, I, 25, 18 October 1781.
21. For the new history of Indian factionalism, see Robert Berkhofer, Jr., "The Political Context of a New Indian History," Pacific Historical Review 40 (1971), 357, 357-82, and P. Richard Metcalf, "Who Should Rule at Home? Native American Politics and Indian-White Relations," Journal of American History 61 (December 1974), 651-65.
22. Diary of David Zeisberger, ed. Bliss, I, 23, 13 October 1781.
23. Ibid., I, 128, 28 December 1782; 148, 15 May 1783; 216, 16 January 1785.
24. Ibid., I, 77, 21 March 1782. See also I, 85, 8 April 1782.
25. Axtell, "White Indians," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd. ser., 32 (1975), 59-60.
26. Axtell, "Scholastic Philosophy," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd. ser., 29 (1972), 361-62. During the same period the Indians retained perhaps 15% of the captives.
27. Of course the Americans also had Indian allies, but not nearly as many as the British in the Old Northwest and the St. Lawrence Valley. Jack M. Sosin, "The Use of Indians in the War of the American Revolution," Canadian Historical Review 46 (1965), 101-21; S. F. Wise, "The American Revolution and Indian History," in John S. Moin, ed., Character as Circumstance: Essays in Honour of Donald Grant Creighton (Toronto, 1970), 122-200.

28. See William Gordon's remark in his History of the Rise, Progress, and Establishment of the Independence of the United States of America (London, 1788): "The two parties [loyalist and patriot] were actuated by sentiments of the most violent animosity, which was not confined to particular families or places; but creeping within the roofs and to the hearths and floors where it was least to be expected, served equally to poison the sources of domestic security and happiness and to cancel the laws of nature and humanity." Quoted in Archibald Loudon, A Selection, of Some of the Most Interesting Narratives, of Outrages, Committed by the Indians in their Wars with the White People (Carlisle, Pa., 1808), I, 101.
29. Diary of David Zeisberger, ed. Bliss, I, 89, 93; "Narrative of the Captivity of Mrs. Jane Whittaker, Daughter of Sebastian Strobe, a Revolutionary Soldier," The Quarterly Journal of the New York State Historical Association 11 (1930), 237-51, esp. 239-40.
30. Axtell, "White Indians," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 32 (1975), 58, 62.
31. Diary of David Zeisberger, ed. Bliss, I, 133, 12 January 1783.
32. According to a hostile but accurate witness, the agents "were continually plotting the destruction of the Christian Indians' settlements, as the only means of drawing the Delaware nation, and with these, the Christian Indians, into the war," but this is not the same as wishing the Indians themselves destroyed. That the Americans destroyed their vehicle must have given the agents cause for promoting the Indians' innate sense of injustice. Wallace, Thirty Thousand Miles with John Heckewelder, p. 158. See also Reginald Horsman, Matthew Elliott, British Indian Agent (Detroit, 1964), ch. 2, and Thomas Boyd, Simon Girty, The White Savage (New York, 1928), *passim*.
33. Berkhofer, Salvation and the Savage, Introduction; Bernard W. Sheehan, Seeds of Extinction: Jeffersonian Philanthropy and the American Indian (Chapel Hill, 1973), ix.
34. Diary of David Zeisberger, ed. Bliss, I, 76, 19 March 1782.
35. A Very Remarkable Narrative of Luke Swetland...Written by Himself (Hartford, n.d.), 7-8.
36. John F. Meginness, Biography of Frances Slocum, The Lost Sister of Wyoming (Williamsport, Pa., 1891), p. 67.
37. St. John de Crèvecoeur, Sketches of Eighteenth Century America, ed. Henri L. Bourdin, Ralph H. Gabriel, and Stanley T. Williams (New Haven, 1925), 193-95.
38. Ibid., 195.
39. Ibid., 194.
40. Letters from an American Farmer [1782] (London: Everyman, n.d.), 221-22.
41. Crèvecoeur, Sketches of Eighteenth-Century America, 194. See James L. Seaver, A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison (Canandaigua, N.Y., 1824), ed. Allen W. Trelease (New York, 1961), ch. 8, for the fascinating, though perhaps atypical, story of Ebenezer Allen, a Pennsylvania Tory who fled to the Iroquois, kept three and four Indian and White wives at the same time, sent two Indian daughters and a White son away to school for an

English education, and fought in the Revolution with "a cruelty [that] was not exceeded by any of his Indian comrades!"

#### Further Reading

The educational history of Indian-White relations in the colonial period has yet to be written. Although it pertains to the post-Revolutionary period, Robert Berkhofer's Salvation and the Savage: An Analysis of Protestant Missions and American Indian Response, 1787-1862 (Lexington, Ky., 1965; New York, 1972) is the most useful conceptualization of a true ethnohistory of missionary efforts. James Axtell has focussed on the Indian education of the colonists in "The Scholastic Philosophy of the Wilderness," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 29 (July 1972), 335-366, and "The White Indians of Colonial America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 32 (1975), 55-88.

The impact of the Revolution on Indian society can be followed in rich detail in the writings of the Moravian missionaries, David Zeisberger and John Heckewelder. Zeisberger's two-volume Diary for 1781-1798 was translated from the German and edited by Eugene F. Bliss (Cincinnati, 1885). His History of the Northern American Indians, based on his extensive knowledge of the Iroquois and the Delawares, was written in 1779-1780 on the Muskingum; it was edited by Archer B. Hulbert and William N. Schwarze for the Ohio State Archaeological and History Society (Columbus) in 1910. The missionary's other writings and efforts can be followed in Edmund De Schweinitz, The Life and Times of David Zeisberger (Philadelphia, 1870).

John Heckewelder's religious peregrinations are fascinatingly detailed by Paul Wallace in Thirty Thousand Miles with John Heckewelder (Pittsburgh, 1958), which adds several new translations of Heckewelder material in the Moravian Archives to generous excerpts from An Account of the History, Manners, and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States (Philadelphia, 1819) and A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren Among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians, from its Commencement, in the Year 1740, to the Close of the year 1808 (Philadelphia, 1820).

The missions to the Iroquois are described in Samuel K. Lothrop's Life of Samuel Kirkland (Boston, 1847), the leading American missionary during the war, and in John Wolfe Lydekker's The Faithful Mohawks (Cambridge, England, 1938). The most faithful--and famous--Mohawk was Joseph Brant, whose eventful Life was chronicled in two vast volumes by William L. Stone (Albany, 1838). John Calam has added to Lydekker's account of the Anglican efforts to convert the Iroquois in Parsons and Pedagogues: The S.P.G. Adventure in American Education (New York, 1971).

The best descriptions of the educational character of Indian society are those of the colonial captives, those who eventually returned to White society as well as those who became Indians. Two of the best are James L. Seaver, A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Mary Jemison (Canandaigua, N.Y., 1824), edited by Allen W. Trelease (New

York, 1961), and John F. Meginness, Biography of Frances Slocum, The Lost Sister of Wyoming (Williamsport, Pa., 1891). The rest can be located in the catalogues of the Edward E. Ayer Collection of The Newberry Library, Chicago: Narratives of Captivity among the Indians of North America (Chicago, 1912) and Supplement I (Chicago, 1928). As of 1961 the collection contained some 542 editions of narratives by some 323 captives.

712-142-07

The World Turned Upside Down: The American Revolution  
As A Catastrophe For Native Americans

by

James H. O'Donnell

To most readers, no doubt, my title suggests a line from the Yorktown episode at the end of the struggle for American Independence. Tradition has it that when the British bands played at the surrender field, they lifted the strains of a tune called "The World Turned Upside Down." For the native Americans, of course, there had been attempts to turn their world upside down long before the time of the American Revolution. Again and again the people without color had sought to change Indian culture or take advantage of the tribes. But as I hope to point out in this paper, during the period of the War for American Independence there was a critical juxtaposition of events which loosed unparalleled destructive forces. This time the apocalyptic horseman of war would bring all his fellows with him at once, so that the tribes would know "all the Noise and Miseries of War, and Blood and Murder stain our Land again."<sup>1</sup>

As the rumblings of discontent and the possibility of war in North America grew louder toward the end of 1774, the issue of participation by the Indians became a matter of consideration for all. Forest soldiers had been involved in most military conflicts in North America, and certainly all those in the eighteenth century, so it was to be expected that they might play some role in any new war which broke out. At this point one should lay aside the advantages of historical hindsight so he will not say: "Well, why worry about the Indians, they were not going to do anything anyway." That is an invalid assumption. No one in his right mind at the time would fail to consider the place of the natives. There would be a western front and it would not be quiet. If we would be students of native American studies in this period, we should see three major theatres of land war in North America: the North, the South, and the West.

If we can conceptualize the seacoast and the dangers for the recalcitrant colonials from British blue-jackets, scarlet coats, and provincial corps, they why not visualize the possible threat from the copper Loyalists? No major official on either side failed to recognize the Indian presence. During the winter before Lexington and Concord, General Gage was advising the officials in the British Indian departments to be on guard against troublemakers since there were "ill-advised" persons trying to tamper with the loyalty of the Six Nations.<sup>2</sup>

Gage's warnings were directed to the officials of the British imperial establishment immediately responsible for Indian affairs, the so-called Indian superintendents. In the country north of the Ohio the post was held by Guy Johnson, nephew of Sir William Johnson, who had served as superintendent from 1754 to 1774. South of the Ohio this responsible position was held by John Stuart, who had been appointed in 1760. The superintendencies had been created in the turbulent 1740s and 1750s when British worries over Indian affairs,



the future of the mainland colonies, and the French adversary, had come into particular focus. Early on, the superintendents went through the test of war, when they spent most of their time trying to gain allies for the British armies struggling for the mastery of the continent. Then hard on the heels of the Anglo-French conflict had come an attempt by the warriors of the west under Pontiac to halt the spread of the infectious virus called Euro-American civilization. After the Indian confederacy ceased to function in 1764, the superintendents fell heir to a struggle which had begun at the time of the European intrusion: how to stop the unholy trinity of land, trade and rum from destroying the tribes.

Indeed by the sixth decade of the eighteenth century the situation of the Indians east of the Mississippi was not a desirable one. At the coming of the Europeans most of the tribes had looked to these strangers for trade and alliance. Gifts offered by the natives as gestures of good will had returned in exchange an amazing array of manufactured articles, some rather trivial, others of major significance for tribal lifestyle. Soon woven cloth, trading muskets, metal utensils, and even commercially manufactured wampum were to be preferred to the traditional physical materials of the tribes.<sup>4</sup> It would not be long before the hunters would seek as many deer, and the trappers as many beaver, as time would permit them in order to gain more pelts or skins to exchange for trade goods. So indispensable had trade become that most tribespeople east of the Mississippi would admit, as did a Creek speaker in 1777, "we have been used so long to wrap our Children up as soon as they are born in Goods procured of the White People that we cannot do without..."<sup>5</sup> Any interruption in this exchange of American peltry for European paltry brought loud complaints and sometimes even war, as self-defeating as such a conflict might seem.

Think, too, of the ecological ramifications of the combined effects of the trade and the land demands. Whereas formerly the native hunter asked forgiveness of his brother the bear or the deer for killing him, explaining that he did so because his family needed food, now with little apology he slew to gain skins or pelts<sup>6</sup> for the trade. As the contemporary observer Mark Catesby pointed out:

Before the Introduction of Fire-arms amongst the American Indians, (though Hunting was their principal Employment) they made no other Use of the Skins of Deer, and other Beasts, than to cloath themselves, their Carcasses, for Food, probably, then being of as much Value to them as the Skins; but as they now barter the Skins to the Europeans for other Clothing and Utensils they were before unacquainted with, so the Use of Guns has enabled them to slaughter far greater Numbers of deer and other Animals than they did with primitive Bows and Arrows. This destruction of Deer, and other animals being chiefly for the Sake of their Skins, a small Part of the Venison they kill suffices them; the Remainder is left to rot or becomes a Prey to the Wolves, Panthers, and other voracious Beasts. With these skins they purchase of the English, Guns, Powder, and Shot, woollen cloth, Hatchets, Kettles, Porridge-Pots, Knives, Vermilion, Beads, Rum, etc.

With hunters killing more game at the same time that less became available for hunting, it was only natural that the tribes would fall into worsening predicaments, which in most cases meant deeper into debt to the traders and thus even more dependent on the Euro-Americans.

To add yet another woe to those already besetting the natives because of the European presence, there was the demonic spirit, rum. Rum flowed into the Indian country, from the Gulf to the Lakes, as thousands and thousands of gallons were taken into the villages by the traders. A dram was considered a sine qua non for any negotiations with tribal leaders, but all too often far more than a dram was poured. Individuals, leaders, families, and villages were inebriated into insensibility. To print the laments of tribal leaders over the rum traffic and their requests for its control would fill many pages: to reproduce concrete British actions to plug the cask would require none.

As if it were not enough that the people without color took the produce of the natives' birthrights, both by exchange and by deceit, they also sought to take away the birthright itself. It seemed that no Englishman was ever satisfied with the amount of land in his possession. Land seemed the all consuming passion of the people without color. No matter how much land a tribe ceded, there was clamor for more. Even when the natives learned a few tricks about selling the same land over and over again, there was always someone willing to buy that and more, too. In the two years immediately before the war, for example, one group of trader-speculators managed a purchase from the Cherokees and Creeks (the so-called New Purchase of 1773); another, which styled itself the Transylvania Company, had inveigled the Cherokees out of an enormous tract in 1775; and perhaps worst of all, the land-grabbers on the Virginia-Pennsylvania frontier had precipitated a war (1774) against the Shawnees and Delawares who opposed westward movement. As a Cherokee chief named The Old Tassel would point out after listening to much inconsequential rhetoric at a 1777 conference: "Brothers! the issue is our Land."<sup>8</sup>

Most of the "Brothers" who came into the Indian country in connection with the land or the trade believed that the Indian ought to give up his "wild, nomadic" way and become civilized, i.e., ape the White man. Most tribes wished to avoid this, but in a number of tribes there was yet another factor at work for cultural change. This force was Christianity, represented by the missionaries sent out by the various boards and churches. While we may accept the sincerity and individual faith of these persons, at the same time we may observe that they were preaching a White gospel, where God was a Caucasian, or better yet, an Englishman, and where God's followers were called upon to live in houses like Englishmen, farm like Englishmen. While English missions' efforts during the seventeenth century had been rather ineffective, in the next century a certain amount of attention was given to those in the northeast because of the interest of Sir William Johnson, the Indian Superintendent, who wished as many Indians Christianized and educated as possible. Johnson's partner brought a few young Indians to school at his home and later founded Dartmouth College in New Hampshire. Support came to these endeavors from interested persons in the colonies, individuals in England, and from the Scottish Society for Propagating the Gospel.<sup>9</sup> Among the Indians

of Pennsylvania and Ohio labored dedicated members of the United Brethren.<sup>10</sup>

For all the good intentions and meaningful accomplishments of these missionaries, whatever their denominational allegiance, they were a force dividing the Indian nations against themselves. Tribes had had internal disagreements long before the coming of the White man, but nothing like what was happening as a result of the missionaries, wherein one part of the tribe was denying all its tradition to imitate a new one, while another part clung to the traditional ways, despite the erosions of European material culture. Missionary leaders took groups of converts and set them up in "model villages," and thus pitted tribespeople against tribespeople. No wonder that they were easily consumed by the flames of war!

It should be pointed out here that before 1800 the tribes south of the Ohio did not have the missionary problem that their northern brethren did. From their point of view they were having enough trouble with the "Virginians," as they called all land hungry frontiersmen, without adding woes brought on by the presence of missionaries.

However beset by difficulties, the native Americans had not lost their integrity by Revolution's eve. Despite assertions by blackcoats like Samuel Kirkland, a missionary to the Oneidas, the tribespeople were not completely dependent on a White eye for every need. Thus when news came that the Whites were at war, village and tribal leaders began to assess the situation in terms of their needs. Their first desire was to protect their interests, particularly as that meant guarding tribal lands. To be sure, if they could play off one party against another as they had in the past, then all to the good. But what if they were forced to take sides? It seemed that an alliance with the British was an obvious choice, for since the 1750s there had been developed British imperial offices which had represented the King as the friend of the Indian.

Toward the colonials the Indians had a different attitude. While on the one hand most of the forest entrepreneurs who brought packhorses laden with trade goods were colonials, on the other hand the same individuals dispensed liquor too freely, shortened their steelyards, inflated the prices of their goods, and aided the speculators in obtaining Indian lands. If the trader was sometimes useful, the frontiersman seldom was. Terms of derogation applied to the Whites like Long Knives and Virginians, by definition included all Whites of the same type, whether they happened to be from Pennsylvania, Virginia, or elsewhere.

Since the original people would be involved in whatever war that came, whether they liked it or not, the leaders of the tribes east of the Mississippi would give careful consideration to their predicament and to the allurements of the belligerents before making a commitment. The involvement of the forest soldiers was taken for granted by all parties. After all would not the residents of the West be affected by the outcome of a war in North America? Why the natives any less so than the Whites? By now it seems specious to concern ourselves with the so-called "responsibility" for the use of the Indians. To do that is to fall prey to the propaganda of the time, as when Jefferson included in his philippics against the king: "he has excited domestic insurrection amongst us and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants

of our frontier the merciless Indian savages whose known rule of warfare is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes, and conditions." The native Americans took it for granted that they would be affected by and perhaps involved in any war in North America; the military commanders on both sides assumed that the forest soldiers would be active; only when Indian participation became useful fuel for propaganda mills would there be talk of "merciless Indian savages," or, "assassin-Allies," or the "hell hound of war."

Indeed, during the winter of 1774-75 when Gage was warning the Indian superintendents to be watchful against the Patriots who visited the Indians, Washington was seeking warriors from among the Stockbridge, Passamaquoddy, St. John's, and Penobscot villages. By the fall of 1775 Gage would use Washington's actions to justify his orders to Guy Johnson and John Stuart to bring the Indians into the war "when opportunity offers," for in Gage's words "no terms is now to be kept with them [the colonials]."<sup>11</sup>

Because of their geographical proximity to the early war zones and their long standing support of the British, it would appear that the Iroquois Six Nations would be among the first to involve themselves. But there were several reasons predicating against this, all of which could be summarized in the expression--the Iroquois Confederation was a house divided against itself.<sup>12</sup> Aside from the obvious forces as well. First, there was a breakdown of the imperial machinery so painstakingly built by Sir William Johnson over a period of twenty years. In the summer of 1774 while meeting several delegations of tribesmen, Johnson had died, leaving a void never to be filled and removing a lobbyist for the tribes who would never be replaced. Johnson's nephew, Guy, who had served as his departmental secretary for many years, was in some ways well equipped to fill the place, but Guy had a rival in another member of Sir William's extended family, Daniel Claus. To render the scene more complicated, consider that Claus and Guy Johnson were married to Sir William's two daughters. Daniel Claus claimed that some years earlier the baronet had promised to divide the superintendency between his two sons-in-law, with Claus responsible for the northern half of the territory, and Guy for the southern. At Sir William's death, however, Guy acted the part of Jacob and claimed the entire territory for himself. All these comments about Guy Johnson and Daniel Claus omit John Johnson, heir to the baronetcy and possible claimant to the superintendent's position. Consequently in those crucial months of 1774, 1775, and 1776, overtures to the Six Nations by the British were hampered by Guy's insecurity and his constant efforts to get himself confirmed in the position, not to mention a trip to England made in his attempt to clear up the controversy. In his absence most of the Six Nations people preferred to remain neutral.

The so-called preferred neutrality was encouraged (as was much tribal dissension) by Samuel Kirkland, the pro-American blackcoat mentioned above. A protege of Eleazar Wheelock and former matriculant at Moor's Charity School where he was a classmate of Joseph Brant, Kirkland had settled among the Oneida villages in 1765 with the blessings of Sir William Johnson and the backing of Wheelock. Within a few months after his arrival Kirkland had succeeded in making the Iroquois generally quite unhappy with him. Of course Samuel Kirkland's cosmology led him to adopt an attitude of superiority about

White culture which offended many natives, but more than that, his dissenting theology led him to denounce the baptism and the beliefs of a number of Iroquois who had been influenced by earlier Anglicans.<sup>13</sup> Thus at the outbreak of the American Revolution, one finds unrest in the Six Nations country, much of it brought on by White forces.

Among the western tribes also there were those turning the world upside down. Beyond the Ohio, the tribes most directly threatened by a war were the Shawnees and the Delawares. Both had been involved in the 1774 disturbances known as Lord Dunmore's War, so they had little love for either colonials or British governors. Moreover, they were unhappy with American occupation of the left or south bank of the Ohio. They well knew that once the settlers reached the river, there would be nothing to stop them from coming across to begin taking up lands in the Ohio country.

Among the Delawares pressure from without on the tribe was almost equalled<sup>14</sup> by pressure from within. Since the days of their residence in Pennsylvania, the Delawares had been visited by a succession of Christian missionaries, the most successful of whom had been the Moravians John Heckewelder and David Zeisberger. Since these members of the Unitas Fratrum believed like other missionaries that civilization and Christianization went hand in glove, they drew converts into model communities where they lived in log houses, tilled fields, and went to school and church like White men. But at war's eve, the traditionalists, or pagans, as the Christians called them, were growing more and more resentful of the presence of the missionaries and their Christian converts, the model communities like Schoenbrun and Gnadenhütten, and the deference paid these and other Whites by tribal leaders like Captain White Eyes and John Killbuck. In addition there was danger to the tribe by virtue of its proximity to Pittsburgh and the surrounding White frontier, where it was accepted that all good Indians were deceased.

Among the Delaware's "children," as the Shawnees were called, there were no missionaries to create rival factions, but there was great discontent over the Whites in the Delaware towns, as well as fear that it was only a matter of time before the settlers began to cross the Ohio River for land once more. Toward the Virginians the Shawnees were resentful not only because of the Transylvania Company's purchase and settlement of the Kentucky lands. More restrictions would now be placed on native American use of la belle rivière as well as on the lush bluegrass hunting areas in Kentucky.

The tribe from whom the Kentucky purchase had been made, the Cherokees, were no more happy with the transactions than were their brethren to the north. Seduced by fair words and promises of gifts, the Cherokees had ratified the transactions in March of 1775; even then, however, at least one tribal leader, the young chief known as Dragging Canoe, had protested the sale, warned that the ground would likely be "dark and bloody," and stalked from the meeting.

Cherokee hopes that this sale would satisfy the Whites were soon dashed. Pockets of settlement at Watauga and Nolichucky--already too close to the towns of the Overhill Cherokees--now seemed to expand again as the frontier claimed that agreements made at the time of the Henderson Purchase included bills of sale to them. Even in the face of Cherokee denials, the Wataugans stayed on, with more people coming in daily, and Cherokee fears rising that White cabins would soon lie

at the very edges of villages. All that the meeting at Sycamore Shoals had done was to open wider the gates through which flowed a never ending stream of White families.

Southward from the Cherokees lay the Creeks, who also faced the threat of White expansion and aggression. Although the line of cabins did not reach as far into the Creek country as it did into that of the Cherokees, the settlers of the Georgia and South Carolina backcountry were just as eager to push west as their counterparts in North Carolina and Virginia. Like all frontiersmen from North to South, the Georgians had no scruples about starting a war with the Indians if that could be used as an excuse to drive a punitive expedition into the Indian towns and follow with demands for a land cession.

Although there were no missionaries in the Cherokee or Creek villages whose White gospel demanded cultural suicide, these two southern tribes did have some internal divisions based on European influence. The Cherokees were less troubled than the Creeks since most of their divisions were geographical, owing to their lands being interlaced by the fingers of the Southern Appalachians. There was some leftover factionalism from the French days when one part of the nation had been Anglophile and the other part Francophile.

Factionalism was more evident among the Creeks since there had been French posts in their country for some years. Until late 1774 this division had remained strong because of a leader named Mortar, who was an ardent Francophile. The Mortar's death at the hands of Choctaw raiders in 1774 removed him from the scene, but it did not eliminate the factionalism and it underscored what was yet another problem for the Southern Indians--British imperial machinations which had fomented a war of attrition between the Choctaws and the Creeks. As long as these two nations slew each other, they would slay fewer English, so it had been English policy to arm the two sides and keep them hostile to one another--a policy which was not changed officially until 1777, when John Staurt took steps aimed at a reconciliation which would permit the two tribes to cooperate in support of the British.

West of the Creeks beyond the Tombigbee River lay two other major Southern tribes, the Choctaws and the Chickasaws. The Choctaws, it had been suggested, were troubled by the longtime feud with the Creeks and were divided into two factions, which had been pro-French and pro-British, but which were now pro-Spanish (because of the Spanish presence at New Orleans) and pro-British. These divisions would of course be exacerbated during any conflict, since there would be agents from both sides in their towns.

The Chickasaws on the other hand might be classed as more staunchly pro-British than any other tribes east of the Mississippi. Fiercely loyal, they had resisted French wooings and stopped powerful French military attempts to wipe them out. Courageous warriors and outstanding horse breeders, the Breeds, as they were called, may have seemed at the far back door of the Revolution, but they had a position on the Mississippi which was advantageous for surveying river traffic (which the English wanted them to do) and they had land at the confluence of the Ohio and the Mississippi Rivers (which the Americans wanted as a site for post).

When the shots heard 'round the world were fired in the spring of 1775, it was not long before the tribes heard their reverberations. Emissaries from both sides soon came into the nations with stories of

the growing conflict and with requests for native assistance. Although George Washington did try to recruit a few Indians as auxiliaries, the official position espoused by the United Colonies was Indian neutrality. This philosophy of neutrality, it might be added, did not come from any finer sense of ethics on the part of the Patriots--they simply did not have the goods necessary to hire the forest soldiers. The British on the other hand wished to secure the assistance of the native warriors as auxiliaries for their regular forces. Thus British policy in 1775 was a matter of wooing the tribes in hopes of future assistance.

The tribespeople and their leaders were not so naive nor passive as the Whites might like to think. Most were quite frank when they asserted that their principal desire was for a guaranteed trade and protection for their lands.

It was to a tribe seeking such assurances that the noise and miseries of war came first. By the spring of 1776 the Cherokees had received more insults from the frontiersmen than they were willing to bear. Confronted on every side by the sight of the settlers' cabins, insulted and cheated at every turn, the Cherokees were ready to defend their lands with the hatchet of war, since the calumet of peace had achieved nothing. Additionally they were aroused by receiving the black war wampum from a delegation of Northern tribesmen that came through in the spring of 1776. At about the same time that the Northern warriors visited, a packtrain led by Henry Stuart, deputy and brother to John Stuart, arrived in the Cherokees' Overhill towns. Across the packframes of the sturdy Indian ponies lay sack after sack of powder and lead, to the number of twenty horseloads. Sent by Superintendent Stuart, the ammunition was meant to supply tribal needs for the coming season and for any emergency service requested by the British military officials.

Parleys and councils among the Cherokee leaders in the spring of 1776 could not avoid war. Plans were laid, with Henry Stuart and Alexander Cameron (the Cherokee deputy for the British department) urging careful discipline, the bands were gathered, and by late June the Cherokee warriors sent a thrill of alarm through the back settlements from Georgia to Pennsylvania. Since their carefully laid plans were disclosed by a patriot leader, the Cherokees were unable to take the settlers completely by surprise. Nevertheless, many frontier folk were killed, numbers left homeless, and others forced to abandon the westernmost settlements.

In South Carolina the alarms were doubled because the frontier assaults coincided with the movement by Parker and Clinton against the port of Charleston. Patriots accustomed to read British conspiracy everywhere concluded that the British and their Indian allies had laid this plot for a simultaneous assault and were carrying it off. In conceiving this an evil design, the Americans were crediting the British with more imagination than they deserved. There was no plot; only circumstances.

Now the die was cast and only a few weeks would pass before the Cherokees would know "all the Noise and Miseries of War, and Blood and Murder stain" their lands. While the Cherokee attacks did roll back the frontier for a while, neither these assaults nor the British move against Charleston sapped Patriot strength. By late August the first counterattacks began. Following some rather spontaneous actions by

the South Carolina militia, the two Carolinas and Virginia planned and carried out punitive expeditions which left many Cherokee towns in smoking ruins. Included in the scorched earth were food caches as well as dwellings, so the tribe would be without the thousands of bushels of corn and potatoes they had stored for the winter.

It is patent that the Cherokee world by now was indeed turned upside down. Buffeted from three sides, the nation would not recover its strength again, during the war or after. The disagreement with the tribe, prefigured by Dragging Canoe's pique at the Sycamore Shoals negotiations, came to fruition when that same chief led his followers down the Tennessee River to build some new towns. From that location Dragging Canoe and his warriors attempted to carry on the war against the Americans but with little long-term success.

For the other tribes east of the Mississippi, the Cherokee disaster was a warning of what might happen to them. From Pensacola to Pittsburgh and on to Penobscot this story of Cherokee destruction was told not only by the Indians but by the Patriots as well. Within a few months after the Cherokees returned to their shattered town centers, the story of their sufferings had been repeated in the other villages from the Gulf to the Lakes. Of course the Cherokee refugees had found sanctuary in the Creek towns, so the Creeks knew first hand of the American attacks not to mention the absence of British support.

The Cherokee War of 1776 was an event of major significance for the Cherokee nation, perhaps second only to the nineteenth-century removal. With their world turned upside down by the levelling of their towns and burning of their crops (and the ease with which it was accomplished), the Cherokees could no longer be regarded as a major force in the Revolutionary period. Although they would talk much of aiding the British, they would be unable to do anything more of major military significance during the war. Tribal discord was heightened by the secession of Dragging Canoe's party plus the presence of a strong peace party in the nation after 1776. Even the Raven of Chota, who made great promises to his British friends, was aware that his nation was no longer able to act as it had in 1776 nor could it absorb the kind of punishment that had come in that year.

For the Creeks, those near neighbors of the Cherokees to the South, the Cherokee War of 1776 was instructive. The Creeks had no desire to invite American penetration of their country. But there were other factors predicating against Creek activity on behalf of the British. For one thing the nation was playing the coquette. Jealous that the superintendent had sent so much ammunition into the Cherokee country in early 1776, the Creeks were being rather stand-offish about joining the Cherokees. Too, they were worried about what would happen if they left their towns at the mercy of Choctaw raiders. Indeed, by the time that the British got around to arranging a peace between the two tribes in 1777 and 1778, other forces were at work within the confederacy. Old divisions left by the Anglo-French rivalry were now renewed in the form of competition between British and American sides. In the course of the war, strong pro-American parties would exist among the Lower Creeks while Loyalism would flourish among the Upper Creeks. That Loyalism in the Upper Creeks, it should be noted, might be accounted for partly because of the presence of Alexander McGillivray, a mixed-blood who was serving both in the British Indian



department and in a position of tribal leadership by the middle of the war. Thus the impact of the American Revolution on yet another tribe was the hastening and hardening of existing intratribal factionalism to the permanent detriment of the tribe.

Factionalism's deleterious effects were also visited upon the Choctaws, where pro-British and pro-Spanish groups vied for power. Harmful too was the enormous quantity of rum being taken into the Choctaw towns during the early months of the war. Some of the most depressing stories concerning rum drinking in the South may be found in the protests of the Choctaw chiefs against the rum traffic and in the reports of the British officials who saw entire villages lying under the influence of alcohol.

Only among the Chickasaws could it be said that little factionalism prevailed. Firm in their loyalty to the British, the Breeds remained so until it became obvious that the Americans were their new adversaries. Immediately they sought an accommodation and a treaty which would allow them to live in peace.

It is perhaps ironic that both in the South and in the North it was Iroquoians who suffered most. In the North the location of the Six Nations was much like that of their Southern kinsmen. Situated in reasonably fertile river valleys, the "castles" of the Six Nations' peoples were well located and in positions much desired by the Whites. They, like the Cherokees, were in constant difficulty with the Whites over land. Settlers took land whenever they could and on one occasion even the city of Albany took Iroquois land and refused to pay for it.<sup>16</sup>

In the confederacy there was rampant factionalism.<sup>17</sup> Obviously since it was a confederacy the six tribes there were six visible groups to start with, but that mixture was compounded by the presence of several other factions which may be described as follows: (1) the missionary party A, consisting of earlier converts to Christianity who resented the teachings of Samuel Kirkland; (2) the missionary party B, led by Kirkland; (3) the pro-British party led by Joseph Brant and the followers of Guy Johnson; (4) the pro-American party which in large part coincided with missionary party B, but not altogether; and perhaps (5), although not so easily identifiable, what may be called the Claus party or those who favoured Daniel Claus as successor to Sir William Johnson.

Give all these divisions it is little wonder that the warriors of the Six Nations as a whole played little part in the war during the early months. Nevertheless they were suspect in the eyes of the New York patriots since many loyalists from the area fought under the leadership of men like John Johnson, who were identified with the Indians. American searches in the Iroquois towns for British partisans soon aroused native feelings. Iroquois attempts to deny their interests in 1778 brought a major military expedition against them in 1779.

Beginning early in that year, American leaders including George Washington laid plans for an expedition which would penetrate and destroy the Iroquois towns. By late 1779 more than five thousand troops had trampled through most of the Iroquois settlements. A force of warriors under Joseph Brant, aided by partisans and a few troops from Niagara, were defeated by the patriot army. But perhaps most devastating of all, the crops for the year were destroyed in the

fields ("corn, beans and vegetables"), leaving the Indians to face some long hungry winters. Suggestive of the desolate scene as well as American attitudes is George Washington's description:<sup>18</sup>

The Commander in Chief has now the pleasure to congratulate the Army on the complete and full success of Major General Sullivan and the troops under his command against the Senecas and other tribes of the Six Nations: As a just and necessary punishment for their wanton depredations, their unparalleled and Unnumerable Cruelties, their deafness to all remonstrance and intreaty, and their perseverance in the most horrid acts of barbarism, forty of their towns have been reduced to ashes, some of them large and commodious, that of the Chenissee alone containing 128 houses. Their crops of corn have been entirely destroyed which by estimation it is said would have produced 160,000 bushels, besides large quantities of vegetables of various kinds. Their whole country has been overrun and laid waste and they themselves compelled to place their own security in a precipitate flight to the British fortress at Niagara.

It was perhaps indicative of the nature of the Revolution as a catastrophe for native Americans that within the space of three years the two major Iroquoian groups east of the Mississippi were broken in power. Ironical and perhaps prophetic too that these two major tribes of the colonial period, the Cherokees and the Six Nations, should be ruined by the same forces that were driving home imperial England.

If it can be said that Americans punished the Iroquois, they shattered the Delawares.<sup>19</sup> In the case of both tribes, there was strong White infiltration. The Delawares could be divided into perhaps as many groups as the Six Nations: i.e., (1) those members of the tribes remaining in Pennsylvania which we may call Delaware party P; (2) those who had emigrated westward, were traditionalist in nature, and leaned toward the American cause, whom we shall label Delaware Party A (led by White Eyes and Killbuck); (3) those who lived in Ohio also, were traditionalist in lifestyle but who favored the British, whom we shall call Delaware Party B (led by Captain Pipe); and (4) those who had opted for the Christian lifestyle, lived in "model Christian villages," and, according to their theology, claimed no interest in the American Revolution, who will be our Delaware Party C. As if their fractured tribal structure did not bring them troubles enough, the Ohio Delawares lived near the route going from Detroit and Sandusky on Lake Erie to Pittsburgh at the forks of the Allegheny and Monongahela. As a consequence, the British at Detroit regarded them as a funnel for information to the Americans at Pittsburgh, while the Americans regarded them as a means for reports getting to Detroit about American activities.

The principal leader of the Delaware party B, Captain Pipe, was convinced that the best interests of the tribe lay in yet another removal, this time to northern Ohio where they could be closer to the British post at Detroit. When he could not persuade all the nation to join, he took his band northward where from his new location he gained the ear of the British and poisoned their minds about the Moravian missionaries. Soon, the British had brought most of Delaware party C and their spiritual shepherds northwards. When a group of these Christian Indians returned home to gather crops they were surprised by

a group of frontiersmen from western Pennsylvania, who exacted a terrible revenge for Whites who had suffered at the hands of any Indians on the Pennsylvania-Virginia frontier.

Perhaps the cruelest blow of all fell on the leader of Delaware party A, Captian White Eyes. When a group of American soldiers asked him to guide them through the Ohio country, he went along on what proved to be his last act of friendship. In the course of the expedition he was assassinated by some unknown soldiers. The leaders of the force and American government reported his death as caused by small pox, hoping that the tribe would accept this explanation and not go to war to retaliate for this murder. <sup>20</sup>

Here the world was turned upside down once again for native American groups. Driven from their early homeland by land-hungry Whites, decimated by disease and demon rum, divided into pagan and Christian groups, with those groups dividing again because of war, the Delawares had little chance to resist the burdens of the American Revolution.

In sum I would restate the American Revolution as an event of catastrophic proportions for the native American tribes affected by it. Forces long at work within the nations were concentrated and then released with new fury. Intratribal divisions were exacerbated and thus tribal structures further fragmented. Tribal bargaining positions were now reduced to almost nil since there were no longer two sides to play off against one another. For 175 years the Indians had enjoyed some advantages by virtue of their abilities to bargain between parties who sought their allegiance. Now all of that had come to an end. Now they faced only the colonials become Americans; the White eyes from the east who had so long devoured the land now stood ready to rush westward afresh justifying their actions on the ground that the Indians had chosen the losing side in the war and thus must give up the spoils to the victors.

Divided, decimated, debauched, and in some cases destitute, the eastern tribes faced a grim future on their relations with the newly emerged nation. It was certain that an Indian policy forged on the anvil of war would mean a U.S. position of winner-take-all philosophy toward the American Indian, a policy which in general is still practiced today. At the end as in the beginning we are confronted with a native American world turned upside down!

712-142-05

### Notes

1. Robert Rogers, Ponteach: or, the Savages of America. A Tragedy, (London, 1766), Act II, Scene I.
2. John Stuart to Lord Dartmouth, 28 March 1775, Colonial Office Papers, Series 5, 76:89 (Film from the Library of Congress). All references to the Colonial Office materials will be referred to as C05/volume, page.
3. On the development of the superintendencies see: John Richard Alden, John Stuart and the Southern Colonial Frontier (Ann Arbor, 1944); Wilbur R. Jacobs, ed., The Appalachian Indian Frontier: the Edmond Atkin Report and Plan of 1755 (Lincoln, 1967); Arthur Pound, Johnson of the Mohawks (New York, 1930). For the two eighteenth-century Indian departments, see Archibald Kennedy, The Importance of Gaining and Preserving the Friendship of the Indians to the British Interest, Considered (New York, 1751); "Means Methods, and Nature of Settling a Colony on the Lands South;" and idem, "Notes on Indian Affairs: Abuses in Trade and Land Jobbing," ca. 1754, London Papers, Henry E. Huntington Library. Hereafter the Henry E. Huntington Library will be referred to as HEHL.
4. "A List of the Inhabitants of the City of Albany with the number of Troops they can quarter," November, 1756, Loudoun Papers, HEHL. Included on this list is one Jacobus Hilton, "Wampum Maker."
5. Georgia Treaty with the Upper Creeks, 18 June 1777, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, NC.
6. Mark Catesby, The Natural History of Carolina, Florida, and the Bahama Islands.... (London, 1731-43; 2 vols.), II, xi-xii. For a discussion of the same problem in an earlier context see: Calvin Martin, "The European Impact on the Culture of a Northeastern Algonquian Tribe: An Ecological Interpretation," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 31 (1974), 3-26.
7. Charles Stuart's Report on his visit to the Choctaw country, 1 July 1778, C05/79, 196-202; Catesby, Natural History, II, xiii; Cadwallader Colden, History of the Five Indian Nations Depending on the Province of New York (New York, 1866), 95; Samson Occum, A Sermon Preached at the Execution of Moses Paul, an Indian... (Boston, 1773).
8. An overview of the Southern boundary question before the war may be found in Louis De Vorsey, Jr., The Indian Boundary in the Southern Colonies, 1763-1775 (Chapel Hill, 1966). For the Old Tassel's speech see the Treaty of Long of Holston, 1777, North Carolina Department of Archives and History, Raleigh, N.C.
9. Much information concerning William Johnson's interest in Indian missions may be found in the Samuel Kirkland Papers, Hamilton College Library, Clinton, New York; Sir William Johnson Papers, edited by James Sullivan and Alexander C. Flick (Albany, 1921-62; 13 vols); the Claus Family Papers at the Public Archives of Canada; and in the Johnson Papers, 1755-1774, Force Papers, series 8D at the Library of Congress.
10. John Hackewalder, A Narrative of the Mission of the United Brethren Among the Delaware and Mohegan Indians from its

Commencement in the year 1740 to the Close of the year 1808, edited by William E. Connelley (Cleveland, 1907); David Zeisberger, Diary of David Zeisberger, A Moravian Missionary Among the Indians of Ohio, edited by Eugene F. Bliss (Cincinnati, 1885; 2 vols.)

11. Gage to John Stuart, 12 September 1775, CO5/76, 187.
12. Guy Johnson to Lord Darmouth, 10 September 1774, CO5/229, 6-11; same to the same, 6 October 1774, CO5/75, 479-501; and Daniel Claus to "Sir," 2 December 1774, Claus Papers, Public Archives of Canada.
13. For a recent discussion of Kirkland's role among the Iroquois during the war see Barbara Graymont, The Iroquois in the American Revolution (Syracuse, 1972). Dr. Graymont's strongly pro-Kirkland views should be contrasted with the numerous complaints against the minister to be found in the Claus Papers at the PAC and the Johnson Papers at LC.
14. Heckewelder, Narrative, passim; Zeisberger, Diary, passim.
15. Deposition of Charles Robertson, 3 October 1777, in William P. Palmer, et. al. (eds.), Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, 1652-1781 (Richmond, 1875-1883; 11 vols), I, 291. The discussion of the frontier war in the south is drawn from the author's Southern Indians in the American Revolution (Knoxville, 1973).
16. The most recent account of the Iroquois in the American Revolution is Graymont, Iroquois in the American Revolution. With regard to the Albany land problem see "At a Treaty held this Day with the Indians of the Six Nations at the City of Albany," 1 September 1775, Indian File, HEHL.
17. These factions are suggested by my examination of the Kirkland Papers, the Daniel Claus Papers, the Johnson Papers, and the British Head Quarters Papers.
18. Graymont, Iroquois, has an account of the Sullivan expedition, but all may not agree with her assessment of the destruction as having little long-term impact.
19. Heckewelder, Narrative; Zeisberger, Diary; Edward Hand Papers, Library of Congress; George Morgan Letterbooks and Papers, Library of Congress.
20. George Morgan to "Dear Sir," 12 May 1784, George Morgan Papers, LC.

712-142-06

The American Revolution and the American Indian:  
Problems in the Recovery of a Usable Past

by

Vine Deloria, Jr.

After the presentation of six fine papers on the American Indian and the American Revolution one is tempted to retire from the field silently rather than attempt to comment on the studied views of six formidable scholars. Constructing a commentary on any aspect of American political life, theories and events is a hazardous enterprise at best. Liberals tend toward self-flagellation in which virtually nothing of the past has a noble bearing when seen in the shadow of contemporary events. Conservatives are outraged when confronted with the facts of history as if believing that something didn't happen erases the past.

Furthermore in contemporary life we have deliberately cut down the old authority figures who once defined our existence for us, and so unless Walter Cronkite tells us "that's the way it is" we have no guidelines to use in determining who we are, what we are likely to become, and what it will have meant to have survived a rather nebulous and uncontrollable process of growth.

The frightening thing about the celebrations of the bicentennial is that we are tempted to simply increase the velocity with which we manipulate the familiar symbols of our past without coming to grips with a more profound understanding of our history. Things have probably been much better and much worse than we can imagine, and it is only when we enter the arena of discussion of American Indians and the American Revolution that we can determine just how polarized the events of American history have been.

I would like, therefore, to take a very extreme position in discussing the influence of the American Revolution on the American Indian and work from this position to a broader understanding of the meaning of American history. The American Revolution is in a real sense the most radical experiment in the history of human existence, but its radical nature cannot be properly understood unless we get to the roots of honest examination.

In 1793 the Seven Nations of Canada and a dozen other tribes met in a general council at the foot of the Miami Rapids and drew up a protest against the encroachment of Whites in the lands north of the Ohio. The American commissioners had offered, once again, to purchase their lands for settlement and the chiefs responded:

Brothers, money to us is of no value, and to most of us unknown; and as no consideration whatever can induce us to sell the lands, on which we get sustenance for our women and children, we hope we may be allowed to point out a mode by which your settlers may be easily removed, and peace obtained.

Brothers, we know that these settlers are poor, or they would never have ventured to live in a country which has been in continual trouble ever

since they crossed the Ohio. Divide therefore this large sum of money, which you have offered to us among these people; ... and we are persuaded they would most readily accept it in lieu of the lands you sold to them.

The Americans, of course, could not conceive of using the money they had brought to purchase the Indian lands to provide social services for their own poor and to allow the Indians to keep their homelands intact. In their failure to conceive of a society in which the whole was responsible for its individual parts lies a great tool for analysis of the meaning of the American Revolution for American Indians. James Axtell hints at this subject when he tells us that: "The competition for empire was primarily an educational contest for the loyalty and allegiance of the members of the competing cultures -- English, French, and Indian -- and therefore a moral contest between competing cultural styles."<sup>2</sup>

The political documents of the American Revolution, especially the Declaration of Independence, proclaim a high moral purpose, and with the success of the recent Civil Rights movement many American intellectuals have congratulated themselves and their ancestors on the usefulness of the high sense of morality incorporated in the American state documents. Buttressing our understanding of these documents has been the whole area of natural law, defined in various ways, that seems to justify the events of American history.

But if we conceive of the struggle for jurisdictional supremacy over the continental United States land area as a moral contest, a battle between the agriculturalist and the hunter, the eventual success of the civilized against the barbarian, then let us look at the state of conditions existing in the North American continent at the time of the Revolution and see if the contest, no matter how moral in the abstract, was understood by groups of people capable of performing moral acts or understanding the moral content of their acts.

To begin with, the immigrants who populated these shores were not exactly the cream of the crop of Europe. For the most part they were the misfits of their day, the losers in political and theological disputes of the day. Some were Manson-like families of seventeenth and eighteenth-century hippies chased from one land to the next until, in desperation, they arrived on these shores determined to reconstruct for themselves their former homelands. New Swedens, New Frances, and New Englands flourished, and one glance at the map of New England will indicate how thoroughly the new settlers wished to relive their former lives in familiar places.

No comprehensive theory of human existence, no profound religious insights, and no universal political ideas came to these shores initially. Rather the ideas that came with the first settlers were the perverted ideas which had failed in Europe, the psychological walking wounded arrived bringing with them an irrational fear of the unknown which was slightly less emotional than the fear of extinction which they had known in Europe. All of the ideological failures of European history arrived in the coastal areas with the Pilgrims and it has taken us many centuries to even comprehend the extent of disaster which the first settlers presented to the Indians and to themselves.

Secondly, a large portion of the first generations of settlers were the criminal element of England which had a choice of immediate execution or exile in the wilderness of America. Georgia was a penal colony of the British crown and the first families of Georgia for many generations were descendants of whores and footpads of the old world. There was not, therefore, an inbred respect for law or human rights that we today attribute to the Founding Fathers. A significant proportion, then and now, was from the beginning devoted to the violation of laws, the disregard to rights of any kind, and the casual murder or rape of those who resisted them. Something in the neighborhood of 50,000 convicts were transported to the New World in an effort to preserve law and order in the Old.<sup>3</sup>

Finally, a substantial number of immigrants arrived in the New World with their foreseeable future years already mortgaged to pay for their passage over. "Redemptioners" or "free-willers" booked passage for America and on their arrival were auctioned off by the ship captain to the highest bidder. Many English merchants specialized in this trade and fraudulent practices in recruiting were commonplace. The immigrants were packed aboard like sardines, and a mortality of more than 50% during a trip to the New World was not unusual. These people, if they had hope, had a rugged term of servitude before they could hope, and they<sup>4</sup> composed almost half of the total White immigrants before 1776.

Rather than beginning with a fairly intelligent, devout and honest citizenry, therefore, the English settlers were more than 50% indentured servants, a considerable percentage of criminals, and a scattering of religious fanatics. It was quite a group to amass under any circumstances.

The major justification used by the Europeans to dispossess the American Indians was that it was God's intent that the farmer should replace the hunter and that civilization should be brought to the shades of primitive chaos. Visualizing the New World as a last chance at living in the Garden of Eden, the early settlers set out to establish roots in the Atlantic coastal areas. But the myth of the European as divine gardener is one of the most ludicrous beliefs which White Americans still cherish.

Rather than being natural farmers, most of the early colonies actually imported food from Europe because they did not know how to farm! The Swedish colony on the Delaware actually imported food from Sweden for the first twenty years of its existence; only after nearly a generation had gone by did they learn how crops could be grown in the New World.<sup>5</sup> Finally it was not the natural genius of the European, his civilized state, or instructions from God that enabled the White settler to survive but his adaptation of Indian techniques in agriculture. The intensive cultivation methods of European farming were finally abandoned by the immigrants and they moved swiftly to the other extreme, farming soils to exhaustion and abandoning them to move on to new fields.

American genius in agriculture, until the Dust Bowl year, has really never been its cleverness but rather its inexhaustible supply of land which could be carelessly exploited and abandoned. Southern planters controlled thousands of acres and ruthlessly exploited labor and land, and then sought more land. By the time of the Revolution "the older tobacco areas along the Chesapeake and the great rivers of



Virginia were beginning to decay from soil exhaustion."<sup>6</sup> Arthur Schlesinger remarked that even the beginnings of America were the result of a European quest for a more palatable diet, a search for spices to season their coarse foods.

Schlesinger also remarked that the discovery and settlement of the New World resulted in:

a dietary revolution unparalleled in history save possibly for the first application of fire to the cooking of edibles. Picture the long centuries when the Old World existed without white and sweet potatoes, tomatoes, corn and the many varieties of beans, and you have some notion of the extraordinary gastronomic advance. Add, for good measure, such dishes as pumpkins, squashes, turkeys, cranberries, maple syrup, blackberries, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, crab apples, chestnuts and peanuts.

Schlesinger concludes that "in the four and a half centuries since Columbus blundered into the Western Hemisphere the American has not developed a single indigenous staple beyond those he derived from the Indians. Today, it is estimated, four sevenths of the country's agricultural output consists of plants (including tobacco and a native species of cotton) which were discovered with the New World.

The argument, therefore, that the Europeans brought civilization, conceived as a sedentary agricultural enterprise, to the New World, is absurd on its face. That they could not see, in the life-style of the Indians, civilization in its best agricultural expression, may be another question and certainly one hinted at by our other six papers. "Suppose our fathers had to depend on wheat for their bread," reflected a Tennessean of later days with pardonable exaggeration, "it would have taken them a hundred years longer to reach the Rockies." If ever.<sup>10</sup>

Even the political ideas of the settlers had little or no novelty. Derived from Europe they were bounded by traditions of Europe to such an extent that the colonists were caught in a continuous undercurrent of discontent. Economic theory was shifting in Europe from mercantilism, the amassing of gold and silver on a national basis, to Adam Smith's individualistic theories that saw national wealth in terms of the sum of affluent individuals which composed the policy-making portion of the nation. In England all legal theories went to the protection of property from arbitrary actions of the King; and political theory, as filtered through the realism of economics, looked only to the steady operation of law to protect property.

England, from which many of the political ideas had come, was also struggling with the idea set forth a century earlier by John Locke and Thomas Hobbes, that human government was a creation of people in a remote time by a consensual contract of the governed. Projecting backwards from present governments to the mists of antiquity the English thinkers saw, but usually did not draw, the conclusion that governments could and should be rendered obsolete whenever they infringed upon the contemporary conceptions of human rights as articulated in contemporary understandings of the consensual contract which constituted governments.

Undergirding the conception of government as a consensual arrangement was the feeling, derived in part from the successful results of Newtonian physics, that governments are subject to natural law, antedating and superior to all human ordinances, and that natural law mandates for humans certain inalienable rights. Government is therefore reducible to a cosmic rhythm that defines a minimum standard of decency which operates in an orderly and reasonable manner with rules readily ascertainable through logic and contemplation.

Finally, merged with these political and economic doctrines was the quasi-religious doctrine that the greatest human motive was that of self-interest and that, properly enlightened, self-interest, through the guidance of common sense, would allow a society to conduct its business with a minimum of interference from governmental institutions. It was safe, therefore, to diffuse the power of groups of people throughout a number of institutions because a general self-interest worked spontaneously to provide a social attitude that benefitted individual members thereof. The conception of the physical universe working its way efficiently and mechanically toward perfection was transferred to the realm of social thought, and social institutions were attributed a kind of divine guidance that few deities would have recognized.

When this conglomerate of ideologies hit the American shores and filtered among the criminals, religious fanatics, and indentured servants, it appealed to the worst of their instincts because it was basically a European doctrinal complex transported to a world in which the physical and political, and indeed even religious boundaries of Europe did not exist. Scattered efforts were made to reincorporate the old baronial holdings of Europe into the new continent and Francis Jennings is correct when he says that the American Revolution was essentially a baron's revolt,<sup>11</sup> but even the idea of privileged holdings was tenuous in the New World.

The Carolinas had landgraves and caciques and Maryland had a brief bout with manors owned by lords of quasi-feudal powers but the nearest thing to old world landholdings was in patroon system in New York which was as much a concession to earlier Dutch settlers as it was a method of settling large areas fast. It was not long after the Revolution started before the large patroon estates were broken up because of their loyalist tendencies.<sup>12</sup>

Religious hierarchies were also difficult to transfer to the New World and the old holds exercised by national churches over individual beliefs were not nearly as potent in America. Roger Williams demonstrated very early that religious intolerance in the settled colonies was not absolute since all a dissident had to do was move a few miles down the road and set up an anti-establishment where he could extend religious freedom or establish an intolerant regime of his own. Whatever religious unity and discipline existed in the immigrant groups was shattered by the land of America, and the vast expanse of the continent acted as a religious vacuum pulling the souls of men westward and changing them en route.

From 1754 until the Revolution there was continuous change in political institutions so that while the King of England may well have given royal charters to colonial governments or political favorites, his real exercise of power was negligible, and conceptions of political institutions continually changed as Americans developed

their protest from the affirmation that they could not be taxed without their consent to Thomas Paine's ringing rhetoric that nothing short of independence could suffice as an outcome to the struggle between Americans and British. American political conceptions evolved from an attachment to rights derived from Parliament to a thin and temporary relationship to the crown and finally to independence.

Several peripheral considerations must be made before we examine the impact of the Revolution on the American Indians. In the period 1750 to <sup>13</sup>1775 the population of the British colonies more than doubled. For many of the colonists conflict with the King of England was simply irrelevant. They were themselves newcomers in the New World, seeking only to establish themselves, and either unconcerned with English political struggle, or keenly aware of the possibilities for exploitation unveiled in the struggle of established English settlers with their own problems.

The New World, for many of the immigrants, was not a permanent residence but simply a place where quick fortunes could be achieved which could be transferred back to the mother country as a means of gaining entrance into the social and political institutions which they had abandoned to seek their fortunes. Through the last decades of the last century nearly a third of all immigrants to the New World returned to their former homelands with sufficient wealth to enable them to re-establish themselves as part of the privileged class.<sup>14</sup> There was, therefore, hardly a universal conception of the New World as a place in which to sink permanent roots.

The purely tactical aspects of enforcing English law on the American colonies presented impossible problems so that the Crown really had no option, in the final analysis, other than finally losing its American possessions. At the time of the Revolution there were nearly three million Americans scattered along a coast line of more than one thousand miles and reaching, in some places, into the interior more than 200 miles. England had a population of six or seven million people who were surrounded by a European population ten or twelve times as large, many of whom were, at best, neutral.<sup>15</sup>

Logistically the English military commanders were faced with the problem of transporting war materials more than three thousand miles across the ocean, landing in essentially hostile ports, and equipping armies that could spend years marching up and down the sea coast without ever chancing into a decisive battle. There was no way that this land could be occupied for any length of time by any size army in any effective manner. English military men were faced with what appeared to be a war but which, unless the Americans gathered in a convenient spot, was really more of a continuous maneuver. So the coming of armed conflict in the American colonies could have really only one conclusion and that was separation and independence. During the Civil War the North faced essentially the same military problem but the use of railroads and steamboats enabled it to win.

With this background we turn now to the examination of the American Revolution and the American Indian. The Albany conference of 1754 was really the first step of the American Revolution as Mary E. Fleming Mathur reminds us.<sup>16</sup> The problem was, for the colonies, essentially one of foreign relations -- how to treat with the Iroquois -- and in June 1754 delegates from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, Pennsylvania and Maryland met to agree

on a common purpose in settling their relations with the Five Nations. Benjamin Franklin had three years previously sketched out a plan of union and during the conference the delegates went far beyond their original mandate in conceiving how the colonies could meet other problems of government on a commonly shared basis.

Mary E. Fleming Mathur reminds us that the final recommendation of the Albany conference was "like the Iroquois structure, it recommended an unbalanced representation, but left each colony capable of vetoing the whole effort." She further comments that it was "interesting to see that the colonists could not make the system work, could not function under consensualism, but had to adjust to majority rule."<sup>17</sup> The problem, of course, was that the colonies were in an intellectual half-way house, struggling to confront the realities of the New World, anxious to appear as representatives of civilization, and yet bound within an intellectual horizon so limited as to leave the question of what constitutes a society outside the area of consideration.

This confusion is further compounded by the fact that the French and Indian War of 1754-1763 is really the first world war in human history.<sup>18</sup> British and French armies fought not only in Europe and the North American continent but in India and other possessions around the globe, the French losing footholds on two continents. In this context, then, the struggle for North America between colonists and Indian nation really begins in earnest and the failure of the colonists to arrive at a satisfactory form of organization at Albany is a problem that has not really been solved until the present time. The failure of the colonies, a point which Hendrick fully intuites, is that organization of a society depends more on the internal integrity of life styles than upon outward structural forms.

We turn next to Grenville's imperial plan for North America which had been developed in Bute's administration and which carefully articulated eight major points:

1. A line would be drawn approximately along the crest of the Alleghenies, beyond which settlement and unlicensed trade would be forbidden for the time being.
2. Royal commissioners of Indian Affairs would control relations with the Indians west of the line. They would regulate the commerce carried on by traders licensed by the colonial governors, make treaties with the Indians, and prevent unauthorized settlement.
3. Purchases of land from the Indians would be made only by the Crown for subsequent granting or resale to individuals after a plan for orderly settlement had been worked out.
4. A large force of British regulars would be stationed in North America.
5. New colonies would be organized in Nova Scotia and the Floridas, which would follow in time the existing pattern of the older colonies.
6. Canada would retain for the time being its autocratic government, but with recognition of the

- right of the French colonists to retain their language, religion, and local laws and customs.
7. With naval assistance, enforcement of the trade and navigation laws and collection of the customs duties would be greatly tightened.
  8. A revenue would be raised in the Americas to defray the cost of these services and especially of the troops in the New World.<sup>19</sup>

The whole plan was orderly and sound and if developed in a bounded land where all factors could remain the same, it would have proved sufficient to handle the problem. But in the New World there was an expanding property base. People dissatisfied with their status in society, especially in respect to their ownership of property, could simply move into the interior and lawlessly seize new lands and property.

The whole political theory of equal rights for men which was emerging in the colonies in the period 1754-1776 was based upon a former European theory of law which protected property. Yet in the New World the last requirement of law was protection of property because property was the one aspect of society that was geometrically increasing whereas the other factors were remaining, in comparison, relatively stable. During this period the British policy was to find a means of controlling property through taxation but the only realistic way in which that could be done was to tax that aspect of property which connected the colonists to the rest of the world.

The Stamp Act of 1764, the Quartering Act of 1765, the Townshend Acts of 1767, and finally the Tea Act of 1773 thus struck at the most important social aspect of colonial existence, their relationship with Europe and their identity as colonies. Were they or were they not Englishmen? Or were they a new breed of men?

In an effort to resolve these questions which, in their final analysis, were social identity problems, Massachusetts called a congress to meet in New York shortly before the Stamp Act was to go into effect. Nine colonies sent delegates and their resolutions reflect the confusion present in the minds of the colonists at that time. Resolutions III, IV, and V echo the unarticulated problem of social and national identity felt intuitively by the colonies:

- III. That it is inseparably essential to the Freedom of a People, and the undoubted Right of Englishmen, that no taxes be imposed on them, but with their own Consent, given personally, or by their Representatives.
- IV. That the People of these Colonies are not, and from their local Circumstances cannot be, Represented in the House of Commons in Great Britain.
- V. That the only Representatives of the People of these Colonies are Persons chosen therein by themselves, and that no Taxes ever have been or can be Constitutionally imposed<sup>20</sup> on them but by their respective Legislatures.

The important word in these three resolutions is, of course, "Englishmen" and while the basic theory of American revolutionary

theory is contained in these resolutions it is important to note that the context in which these rights make sense is that of English culture. The propositions which the Declaration of Independence holds as self-evident are self-evident in a British milieu which is, in fact, finite in population, in available property, and in the rules and regulations which established guidelines for the protection of property. When any of these factors are altered or their impact on society is accelerated, the implied social contract underlying the theory of government disappears and the institutions become exploitive in and of themselves.

Yet the colonists did not understand how far from the requirements of their political theories the reality of lands and peoples in the New World had taken them. Still relying on the implied contract of peoples forming a government they vested major legislative authority in assemblies, even demanding that special conventions be called to ratify the Constitution of the United States when they discovered that the Articles of Confederation could not provide a suitable political framework of government. The provision for admitting new states was the reserve of Grenville's plan for development of Nova Scotia and the Floridas, and it reflected the expectation of the Americans that the social contract of Hobbes and Locke would magically work itself out in the wilderness beyond the original colonies.

The American Revolution can be understood, therefore, as transferring an abstract set of propositions to a physical setting in which there were no real boundaries within which the contract could function. American social and political order has been able to work primarily because it has always allowed greater economic opportunity for the mass of people than it allowed expression of political rights or participation in political decision making. That is to say, during the two centuries of American political existence there have been few real opportunities to test the validity of political ideas because the relative freedom of economic opportunity has provided an escape valve for discontent.

When things have come to a standstill new ways of opening additional economic opportunities have been found to release the internal pressures which build up when the basic theory of government does not provide an answer to the meaning of human existence nor describe properly the function of a society. Until the frontier closes the American west provides an arena in which the criminal elements of the United States can re-enact the drama of a few centuries before. The struggle of labor and minority groups for political rights always becomes the leverage of getting additional economic benefits, and it is no surprise to us that in the midst of the Civil Rights struggle of the last decade a "War on Poverty" is declared and an "Economic Opportunity Act" is passed.

Nor should we be surprised at the Full Employment Act of 1946 as an answer to the failure of American society to absorb the returning war veterans, the Social Security Act to counteract the trauma of the Depression, the Homestead Act to disperse the energies of the Civil War period. The functioning of the American political system has always been to use economic expansion as a means of providing an additional context in which the political problems of the interaction of human beings can be dissipated in a larger and more chaotic realm.

We return, then, to the council at the foot of the Miami Rapids in 1793 and ask why it never occurred to the American commissioners to accept the Indian offer to use the money offered for their lands to benefit the poor and hopeless of the United States, leaving the Indian lands intact. And we discover that there really was no conception in the minds of American political leaders or in American political theory itself, that a society had to confine itself within certain boundaries or that its function was to create a sense of nationality among diverse peoples. They could not provide for their own poor because the only glue which held the American government together was a process of continual expansion, the transference of problems of political importance to the realm of economics.

Growth and its subsequent muting of political controversy kept the American system functioning for two centuries, and it appears to be the only solution to contemporary problems also. Americans now circle the globe, exploiting the natural resources of the planet, but cannot feed, house, or educate their own people. When territorial expansion becomes a geographical impossibility, people become consumers in order to provide a quasi-frontier of imagined need which will keep the system continually accelerating.

Bernard Sheehan is absolutely correct when he sees that the native peoples were the victim of the White man's tendency to see the world from a set of universal conceptions.<sup>21</sup> The distinction which he sees in conceiving the world as a paradise or as a howling wilderness underlines the inability of the Europeans to understand the relationship between a nation and the lands upon which it lives. The wilderness had to be conquered because the conquest would provide a boundary within which the political theory of the protection of property could become functional. Yet the paradise called people beyond the sterility of the social contract to a new conception of society.

American revolutionary leaders certainly intended, as Bernard Sheehan points out, that "the new republic will be a haven for art and science, where conscience will be free and where the poor and persecuted will find respite."<sup>22</sup> But he also reminds us that "the American passion for liberty was an extension of the American passion to possess the earthly inheritance."<sup>23</sup> What I feel he is telling us is that the American conception of liberty could not function without, as a precondition, an infinite potential for material wealth already having been somewhat realized; that liberty was always a function of economic freedom.

Sheehan cites Thomas Jefferson's remark that "the Indians never submitted themselves to any laws, any coercive power, any shadow of government. Their only controuls are their manners, and that moral sense of right and wrong."<sup>24</sup> And James O'Donnell is right when he says that the world was turned upside down for the American Indians by the revolution. O'Donnell points out that the "members of the *Unitas Fratrum* believed that civilization and Christianization went hand in hand, [and] they drew their converts into model communities where they lived in log houses, tilled fields, and went to school and church as White men."<sup>25</sup> The Indian converts were being prepared to function, really, as Englishmen a la the Third Resolution of the Stamp Act Congress of 1765.

Hendrick may have been the guiding spiritual presence at Albany in 1754, and George Washington may have been the Father of his Country, but a contemporary American has personified American political theory far better than either of these gentlemen. I refer, of course, to John Mitchell, the beloved "Big Enchilada" of the Watergate Follies who warned us "watch what we do, not what we say." This attitude has really dominated American political theory in its practical application far more than the Declaration of Independence or the Bill of Rights.

Reginald Horsman reminds us that not everyone saw the world through ideological blinders. "Knox," he tells us, "feared that American expansion over Indian land would be viewed as a sordid episode by dispassionate observers." To quote from Horsman's paper, "How different would be the sensation of a philosophic mind to reflect, that, instead of exterminating a part of the human race by our modes of population, we had persevered, through all difficulties, and at last imparted our knowledge of cultivation and the arts to the aboriginals of the country, by which the source of future life and happiness had been preserved and extended."<sup>26</sup>

We must sadly conclude, however, that there really was no knowledge of cultivation and the arts worthy of transmission; and, because American society lacked the substance of a civilized nation, its only recourse was the inexorable working out of an abstract political theme, the premises of which have remained unexamined even today. Horsman recognizes that fact and comments that "in its Indian policy, as in so many other areas of American life, the United States from the time of the Revolution began the process of reshaping its European and colonial intellectual heritage to suit the needs of a new, expanding nation state."<sup>27</sup>

Indeed, American history has been the unfolding of a process by which an abstract idea, devoid of its cultural roots and geographical origins, was foisted upon an unsuspecting land and its peoples. Axtell's reminder that a cause<sup>28</sup> of converts' recidivism was the imposition of arbitrary authority<sup>28</sup>, and Horsman's finding that the legacy of the eighteenth century was violent hatreds and irreconcilable differences<sup>29</sup> only emphasize the determination, which has been present in all periods of American history, to make the theory work, by benign acts if possible, by force if necessary.

Today we are discovering in nearly every area of life that the tenets of civilized existence, as demonstrated by the Indian nations, were profound, and that the solution of American social problems depends in large measure on adopting the Indian style of life. Not only is this true with respect to ecology, but the compensation theories of punishment and criminal law, the small local community as the basic unit of government, decisions made by consensus rather than compromise of two irreconcilable differences. In family relationships the commitment nature of marriage rather than the contractual seems to be more promising, "Big Brother" programs are necessary to keep delinquency in check, an echo here of Indian kinship customs. And finally, in this gigantic economic depression, the function of government to provide for its constituents.

The American Revolution, we can conclude, was a jump out of time and place of a conglomerate of people who were willing to abandon



participation in history for the opportunity to experiment with a new form of human existence. It was a great historical act of cultural and political patricide, and rebellion against the king was also a rebellion against the nature of society and against the reality of human existence. Whether this experiment will prove to have been valid remains an open question. But we can see the tension today in the continual efforts of American foreign policy to force smaller countries of relatively homogenous racial background and limited geographical and economic resources to conform to the American understanding of social and political existence.

Americans are still, in many ways, and perhaps at the deepest level of the subconscious, atoning for their act of patricide against King George by rushing generously to the aid of any country suffering a disaster while in their foreign policy stubbornly perpetuating the theories which they used to justify their rebellion as Englishmen. How else can we account for our willingness to train Saudi Arabians to defend their oil fields against hostile aggression and at the same time be the only nation to openly threaten to invade them?

The American Indian has an intimate relationship to the American Revolution because of all the peoples in the world the American Indians have most had to bear the impact of the criminality of the United States and to attempt to soften its impact on the rest of the world. In Biblical terms American Indians have had to be the suffering servant for the planet. Their role has been to change the American conception of a society as a complex of laws designed to protect property to a conception of society in which liberty is not a matter of laws, coercive power, or a shadow of government, but is characterised by manners and the moral sense of right and wrong.

### Notes

1. Armstrong, Virginia Irving, I Have Spoken (Chicago, 1971).
2. Axtell, James, "The Broken Twig: The Revolution in Indian Education, above, p. 67.
3. Schlesinger, Arthur M. Paths to the Present (New York, 1964).
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Lacy, Dan, The Meaning of the American Revolution (New York, 1964).
7. Schlesinger, Paths.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Jennings, Francis, "Imperial Revolution," above, pp.
12. Lacy, Meaning.
13. Ibid.
14. Schlesinger, Paths.
15. Lacy, Meaning.
16. Mathur, Mary E. Fleming, "Savages are Heroes, Too, Whiteman!", above, pp. 38-40.
17. Mathur, p. 39.
18. Lacy, Meaning.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid.
21. Sheehan, Bernard, "The Ideology of the Revolution and the American Indian," above, pp. 12-24.
22. Sheehan, p. 17.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid.
25. O'Donnell, James, "The World Turned Upside Down: The American Revolution as a Catastrophe for Native Americans," above, p. 6.
26. Horsman, Reginald, "The Image of the Indian in the Age of the American Revolution," above, p. 11.
27. Horsman, p. 10.
28. Axtell, p. 70.
29. Horsman, p. 10.

712-041-05